

Part 13

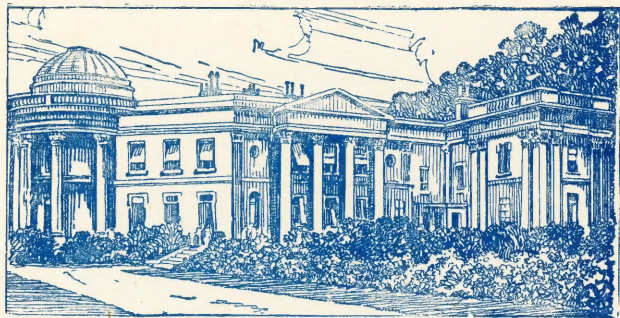
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The
OUTLINE of HISTORY
BY
H. G. WELLS.



G.P. CARRUTHERS.
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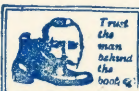
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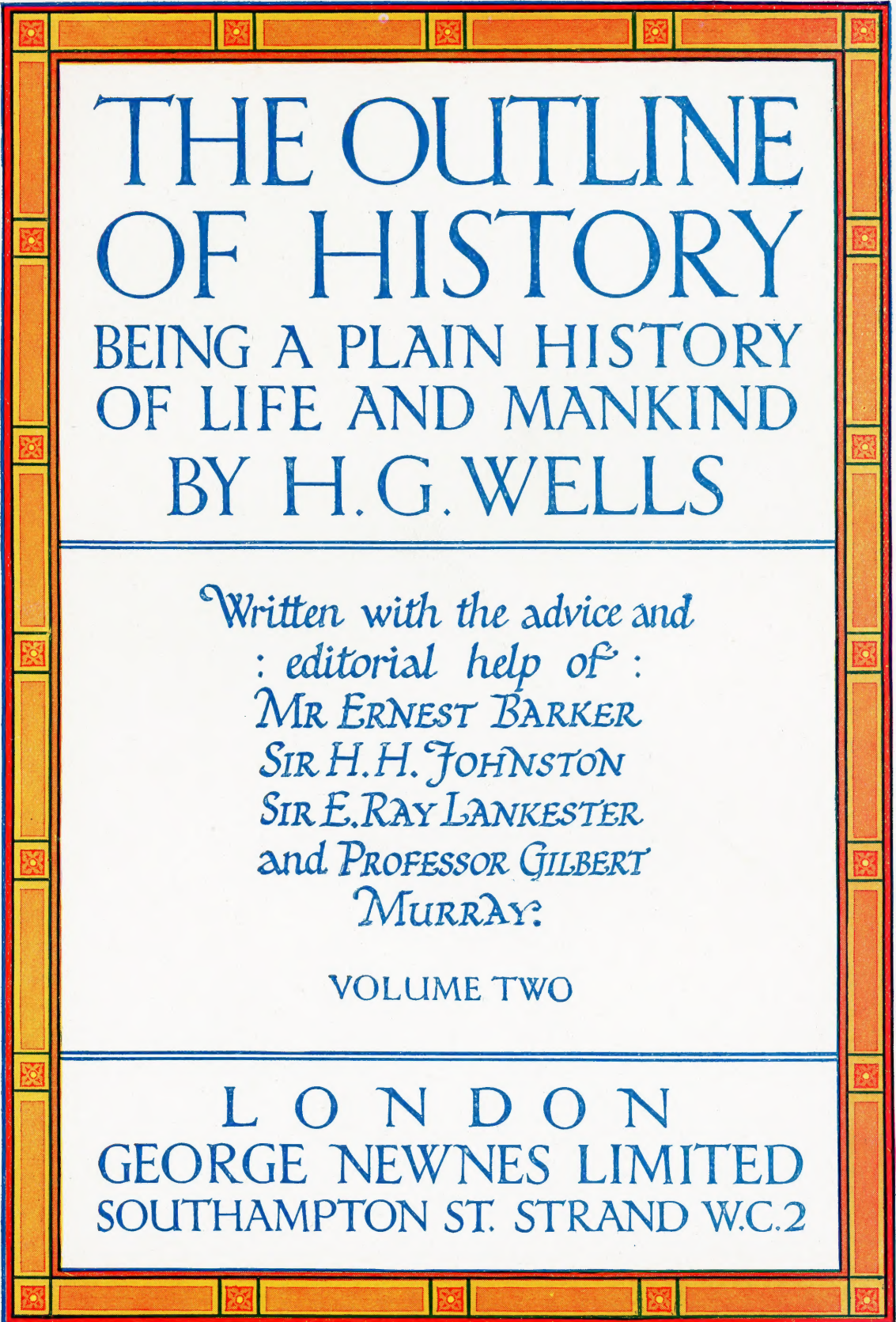
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THE MAN OF THE GREAT PLAINS.

Frontispiece.



THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY

BEING A PLAIN HISTORY
OF LIFE AND MANKIND
BY H.G. WELLS

*Written with the advice and
: editorial help of :
MR ERNEST BARKER
SIR H.H. JOHNSTON
SIR E. RAY LANKESTER
and PROFESSOR GILBERT
MURRAY.*

VOLUME TWO

L O N D O N
GEORGE NEWNES LIMITED
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XXXI

SEVEN CENTURIES IN ASIA

(Circa 50 B.C. to A.D. 650)

§ 1

IN the preceding two chapters we have concentrated our attention chiefly on the collapse in the comparatively short space of four centuries of the political and social order of the western part of the great Roman Empire of Cæsar and Trajan.

Justinian
the Great.

We have dwelt upon the completeness of that collapse. To any intelligent and public-spirited mind living in the time and under the circumstances of St. Benedict or Cassiodorus, it must have seemed, indeed, as if the light of civilization was waning and near extinction. But with the longer views a study of universal history gives us, we can view those centuries of shadow as a phase, and probably a necessary phase, in the onward march of social and political ideas and understandings. And if, during that time, a dark sense of calamity rested upon Western Europe, we must remember that over large portions of the world there was no retrogression.

With their Western prepossessions European writers are much too prone to underrate the tenacity of the Eastern empire that centred upon Constantinople. This empire embodied a tradition much more ancient than that of Rome. If the reader will look at the map we have given of its extent in the sixth century, and if he will reflect that its official language had then become Greek, he will realize that what we are dealing with here is only nominally a branch of the Roman Empire; it is really the Hellenic Empire of which Herodotus dreamt and which Alexander the Great founded. True it called itself Roman and its people "Romans," and to this day modern Greek is called "Romaic." True also that Constantine the Great knew no Greek and that Justinian's accent was bad. These superficialities of name and form cannot alter the fact that the empire was in reality Hellenic, with a past of six centuries at the time of Constantine the Great, and that while the real Roman Empire crumbled up completely

in four centuries, this Hellenic "Roman Empire" held out for more than eleven, from 312, the beginning of the reign of Constantine the Great, to 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

And while we have had to tell of something like a complete social collapse in the west, there were no such equivalent breakdowns in the east. Towns and cities flourished, the country-side was well cultivated, trade went on. For many centuries Constantinople was the greatest and richest city in the world. We will not trouble ourselves here with the names and follies, the crimes and intrigues, of its tale of emperors. As with most monarchs of great states, they did not guide their empire; they were carried by it. We have already dealt at some length with Constantine the Great (312-337), we have mentioned Theodosius the Great (379-395), who for a little while reunited the empire, and Justinian I (527-565).¹ Presently we shall tell something of Heraclius (610-641). Justinian, like Constantine, may have had Slav blood in his veins. He was a man of great ambition and great organizing power, and he had the good fortune to be married to a woman of equal or greater ability, the Empress Theodora, who had in her youth been an actress of doubtful reputation. But his ambitious attempts to restore the ancient greatness of the empire probably overtaxed its resources. As we have told, he reconquered the African province from the Vandals and most of Italy from the Goths. He also recovered the South of Spain. He built the great and beautiful church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, founded a university, and codified the law.² But against this we must

¹ See Holmes' *Justinian and Theodora*.—E. B.

² Great importance is attached to this task by historians, including one of the editors of this history. We are told that the essential contribution of Rome to the inheritance of mankind is the idea of society founded on *law*, and that this exploit of Justinian was the crown of the gift. The writer is ill-equipped to estimate the peculiar value of Roman legalism to man-



Photo: Alinari.

JUSTINIAN AND HIS COURT.
Mosaic at Ravenna.

set his closing of the schools of Athens. Meanwhile a great plague swept the world, and at his death this renewed and expanded empire of his crumpled up again like a blown-out bladder. The greater part of his Italian conquests was lost to the Lombards. Italy was indeed at that time almost a desert; the Lombard historians assert they came into an empty country. The Avars and Slavs struck down from the Danube country towards the Adriatic, Slav populations establishing themselves in what is now Serbia, Croatia, and Dalmatia, to become the Yugo-Slavs of to-day. Moreover, a great and exhausting struggle began with the Sassanid Empire in Persia.

kind. Existing law seems to him to be based upon a confused foundation of conventions, arbitrary assumptions, and working fictions about human relationship, and to be a very impracticable and antiquated system indeed; he is persuaded that a time will come when the whole theory and practice of law will be recast in the light of a well-developed science of social psychology in accordance with a scientific conception of human society as one developing organization and in definite relationship to a system of moral and intellectual education. He contemplates the law and lawyers of to-day with a temperamental lack of appreciation. This may have made him negligent of Justinian and unjust to Rome as a whole.

But before we say anything of this struggle, in which the Persians thrice came near to taking Constantinople, and which was decided by a great Persian defeat at Nineveh (627), it is necessary to sketch very briefly the history of Persia from the Parthian days.

§ 2

We have already drawn a comparison between the brief four centuries of Roman imperialism and the obstinate vitality of the Sassanid Empire in Persia. imperialism of the Euphrates-Tigris country. We have glanced very transitorily at the Hellenized Bactrian and Seleucid monarchies that flourished in the eastern half of Alexander's area of conquest for three centuries, and told how the Parthians came down into Mesopotamia in the last century B.C. We have described the battle of Carrhæ and the end of Crassus. Thereafter for two centuries and a half the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids ruled in the east and the Roman in the west, with Armenia and Syria between them, and the boundaries shifted east and west as either side grew stronger. We have marked the utmost eastward extension of the Roman

Empire under Trajan (see map to chap. xxix., § 3), and we have noted that about the same time the Indo-Scythians (chap. xxix., § 4) poured down into India.

In 227 occurred a revolution, and the Arsacid dynasty gave way to a more vigorous line, the Sassanid, a national Persian line under Ardashir I. In one respect the empire of Ardashir I presented a curious parallelism with that of Constantine the Great a hundred years later. Ardashir attempted to consolidate it by insisting upon religious unity, and adopted as the state religion the old Persian faith of Zoroaster, of which we shall have more to say later.

This new Sassanid Empire immediately became aggressive, and under Sapor I, the son and successor of Ardashir, took Antioch. We have already noted how the Emperor Valerian was defeated (260) and taken prisoner. But as Sapor was retiring from a victorious march into Asia Minor, he was fallen upon and defeated by Odenathus, the Arab king of a great desert-trading centre, Palmyra.

For a brief time under Odenathus, and then under his widow Zenobia, Palmyra was a considerable state, wedged between the two empires. Then it fell to the Emperor Aurelian, who carried off Zenobia in chains to grace his triumph at Rome (272).

We will not attempt to trace the fluctuating fortunes of the Sassanids during the next three centuries. Throughout that time war between Persia and the empire of

Constantinople wasted Asia Minor like a fever. Christianity spread widely and was persecuted, for after the Christianization of Rome the Persian monarch remained the only god-monarch on earth, and he saw in Christianity merely the propaganda of his Byzantine rival. Constantinople became the protector of the Christians and Persia of the Zoroastrians; in a treaty of 422, the one empire agreed to tolerate Zoroastrianism and the other Christianity. In 483, the Christians of the east split off from the Orthodox church and became the Nestorian church; which, as we have already noted, spread its missionaries far and wide throughout Central and Eastern Asia. This separation from Europe, since it freed the Christian bishops of the east from the rule of the Byzantine patriarchs, and so lifted from the Nestorian church the suspicion of political disloyalty, led to a complete toleration of Christianity in Persia. With Chosroes I (531-579) came a last period of Sassanid vigour. He was the contemporary and parallel of Justinian. He reformed

taxation, restored the orthodox Zoroastrianism, extended his power into Southern Arabia (Yemen), which he rescued from the rule of Abyssinian Christians, pushed his northern frontier into Western Turkestan, and carried on a series of wars with Justinian. His reputation as an enlightened ruler stood so high, that when Justinian closed the schools of Athens, the last Greek philosophers betook themselves to his court. They



Photo: Sebah & Joaillier.

JUSTINIAN'S CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA AT CONSTANTINOPLE.



Photo : Major W. J. P. Rodd.

CHOSROES II ON HIS WAR-HORSE.
A rock carving at Takht-i-Bostan.

sought in him the philosopher king—that mirage which, as we have noted, Confucius and Plato had sought in their day. The philosophers found the atmosphere of orthodox Zoroastrianism even less to their taste than orthodox Christianity, and in 549 Chosroes had the kindness to insert a clause in an armistice with Justinian, permitting their return to Greece, and ensuring that they should not be molested for their pagan philosophy or their transitory pro-Persian behaviour.

It is in connection with Chosroes that we hear now of a new Hunnish people in Central Asia, the Turks, who are, we learn, first in alliance with him and then with Constantinople.

Chosroes II (590-628), the grandson of Chosroes I, experienced extraordinary fluctuations of fortune. At the outset of his career he achieved astonishing successes against the empire of Constantinople. Three times (in 608, 615, and 627) his armies reached Chalcedon, which is over against Constantinople; he took

Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem (614), and from Jerusalem he carried off a cross, said to be the true cross on which Jesus was crucified, to his capital Ctesiphon. (But some of this or some other true cross had already got to Rome. It had been brought from Jerusalem, it was said, by the "Empress Helena," the idealized and canonized mother of Constantine, a story for which Gibbon displayed small respect.¹) In 619 Chosroes II conquered that facile country, Egypt. This career of conquest was at last arrested by the Emperor Heraclius (610), who set about restoring the ruined military power of Constantinople. For some time Heraclius avoided a great battle while he gathered his forces. He took the field in good earnest in 623. The Persians experienced a series of defeats culminating in the battle of Nineveh (617); but neither side had the strength for the complete defeat of the other. At the end of

¹ *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xxiii.

the struggle there was still an undefeated Persian army upon the Bosphorus, although there were victorious Byzantine forces in Mesopotamia. In 628 Chosroes II was deposed and murdered by his son. An indecisive peace was concluded between the two exhausted empires a year or so later, restoring their old boundaries; and the true cross was sent back to Heraclius, who replaced it in Jerusalem with much pomp and ceremony.

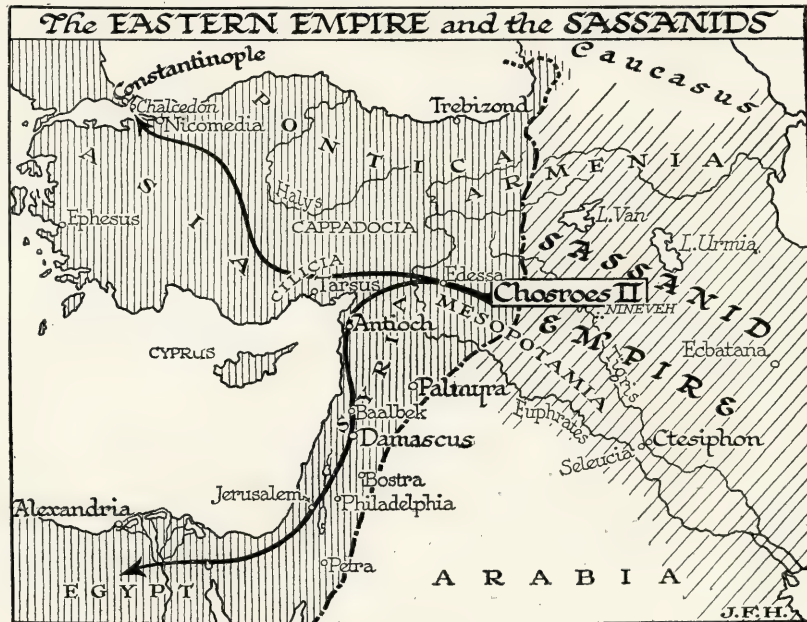
§ 3

So we give briefly the leading events in the history of the Persian as of the Byzantine Empire.

What is more interesting for us and less easy to give are the changes that went on in the lives of the general population of those great empires during that time. The present writer can find little of a definite character about the great pestilences that we know swept the world in the second and sixth centuries of this era. Certainly they depleted population, and probably they disorganized social order in these regions just as much as we know they did in the Roman and Chinese empires.

The late Sir Mark Sykes, whose untimely death in Paris during the influenza epidemic of 1919 was an irreparable loss to Great Britain, wrote in *The Caliph's Last Heritage* a vivid review of the general life of Nearer Asia during the period we are considering. In the opening centuries of the present era, he says: "the direction of military administration and imperial finance became entirely divorced in men's minds from practical government; and notwithstanding the vilest tyranny of sots, drunkards, tyrants, lunatics, savages, and abandoned women, who from time to time held the reins of government, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Syria contained enormous populations, huge canals and dykes were kept in repair,

and commerce and architecture flourished, in spite of a perpetual procession of hostile armies and a continual changing of the nationality of the governor. Each peasant's interest was centred in his ruling town; each citizen's interest was in the progress and prosperity of his city; and the advent of an enemy's army may have sometimes been looked on even with



satisfaction, if his victory was assured and the payment of his contracts a matter of certainty.

"A raid from the north,¹ on the other hand, must have been a matter for dread. Then the villagers had need to take refuge behind the walls of the cities, from whence they could descry the smoke which told of the wreck and damage caused by the nomads. So long, however, as the canals were not destroyed (and indeed they were built with such solidity and caution that their safety was assured), no irreparable damage could be effected. . . .

"In Armenia and Pontus the condition of life was quite otherwise. These were mountain districts, containing fierce tribes headed by powerful native nobility under recognized ruling kings, while in the valleys and plains the peaceful cultivator provided the necessary economic resources. . . . Cilicia and Cappadocia

¹ Turanians from Turkestan or Avars from the Caucasus.

were now thoroughly subject to Greek influence, and contained numerous wealthy and highly civilized towns, besides possessing a considerable merchant marine. Passing from Cilicia to the Hellespont, the whole Mediterranean coast was crowded with wealthy cities and Greek colonies, entirely cosmopolitan in thought and speech, with those municipal and local ambitions which seem natural to the Grecian character. The Grecian Zone extended from Caria to the Bosphorus, and followed the coast as far as Sinope on the Black Sea, where it gradually faded away.

"Syria was broken up into a curious quilt-

which even now command our admiration. . . . Bending in towards Galilee we find the wondrous cities of Gerasa and Philadelphia (Amman) connected by solid roads of masonry and furnished with gigantic aqueducts. . . . Syria is still so rich in ruins and remains of the period that it is not difficult to picture to oneself the nature of its civilization. The arts of Greece, imported long before, had been developed into magnificence that bordered on vulgarity. The richness of ornamentation, the lavish expense, the flaunting wealth, all tell that the tastes of the voluptuous and artistic Semites were then as now. I have stood in the colonnades

of Palmyra and I have dined in the Hotel Cecil, and, save that the latter is built of iron, daubed with sham wood, sham stucco, sham gold, sham velvet, and sham stone, the effect is identical. In Syria there were slaves in sufficient quantity to make real buildings, but the artistic spirit is as debased as anything made by machinery. Over against the cities the village folk must have dwelt pretty much as they do now, in houses of mud and dry stone wall; while out in the distant pastures the Bedouin tended their flocks in freedom under the rule of the Nabatean kings of their own race, or performed the



like pattern of principalities and municipal kingdoms; beginning with the almost barbarous states of Commagene and Edessa (Urfa) in the north. South of these stood Bambyce, with its huge temples and priestly governors. Towards the coast a dense population in villages and towns clustered around the independent cities of Antioch, Apamea, and Emesa (Homs); while out in the wilderness the great Semitic merchant city of Palmyra was gaining wealth and greatness as the neutral trading-ground between Parthia and Rome. Between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon we find, at the height of its glory, Heliopolis (Baalbek), the battered fragments of

office of guardians and agents of the great trading caravans.

"Beyond the herdsmen lay the parching deserts, which acted as the impenetrable barrier and defence of the Parthian Empire behind the Euphrates, where stood the great cities of Ctesiphon, Seleucia, Hatra, Nisibin, Harran, and hundreds more whose very names are forgotten. These great townships subsisted on the enormous cereal wealth of Mesopotamia, watered as it then was by canals, whose makers' names were even then already lost in the mists of antiquity. Babylon and Nineveh had passed away; the successors of Persia and Macedon



Photo : H. J. Shepstone.

VIEW OF PALMYRA FROM THE GRAND COLONNADE, SHOWING THE (LATER) CASTLE IN THE DISTANCE.

had given place to Parthia ; but the people and the cultivation were the same as when Cyrus the Conqueror had first subdued the land. The language of many of the towns was Greek, and the cultured citizens of Seleucia might criticize the philosophies and tragedies of Athens ; but the millions of the agricultural population knew possibly no more of these things than does many an Essex peasant of to-day know of what passes in the metropolis."

Compare with this the state of affairs at the end of the seventh century.

"Syria was now an impoverished and stricken land, and her great cities, though still populated, must have been encumbered with ruins which the public funds were not sufficient to remove. Damascus and Jerusalem themselves had not recovered from the effects of long and terrible sieges ; Amman and Gerash had declined into wretched villages under the sway and lordship of the Bedouin. The Hauran, perhaps, still showed signs of the prosperity for which it had been noted in the days of Trajan ; but the wretched buildings and rude inscriptions of this date all point to a sad and depressing decline. Out in the desert, Palmyra stood empty and desolate save for a garrison in the castle. On the coasts and in

the Lebanon a shadow of the former business and wealth was still to be seen ; but in the north, ruin, desolation, and abandonment must have been the common state of the country, which had been raided with unfailing regularity for one hundred years and had been held by an enemy for fifteen. Agriculture must have declined, and the population notably decreased through the plagues and distresses from which it had suffered.

"Cappadocia had insensibly sunk into barbarism ; and the great basilicas and cities, which the rude countrymen could neither repair nor restore, had been levelled with the ground. The Anatolian peninsula had been ploughed and harrowed by the Persian armies ; the great cities had been plundered and sacked."

§ 4

It was while Heraclius was engaged in restoring order in this already desolated Syria after the death of Chosroes II, and before the final peace with Persia, that a strange message was brought to him. The bearer had ridden over to the imperial outpost at Bostra in the wilderness south of Damascus. The letter was in Arabic, the obscure Semitic language of the

The First
Message
from Islam.

nomadic peoples of the southern desert; and probably only an interpretation reached him—presumably with deprecatory notes by the interpreter.

It was an odd, florid challenge from someone who called himself “Muhammad¹ the Prophet of God.” This Muhammad, it appeared, called upon Heraclius to acknowledge the one true God and to serve him. Nothing else was definite in the document.

There is no record of the reception of this missive, and presumably it went unanswered. The emperor probably shrugged his shoulders, and was faintly amused at the incident.

But at Ctesiphon they knew more about this Muhammad. He was said to be a tiresome false prophet, who had incited Yemen, the rich province of Southern Arabia, to rebel against the King of Kings. Kavadh was much occupied with affairs. He had deposed and murdered his father Chosroes II, and he was attempting to reorganize the Persian military forces. To him also came a message identical with that sent to Heraclius. The thing angered him. He tore up the letter, flung the fragments at the envoy, and bade him begone.

When this was told to the sender far away in the squalid little town of Medina, he was very angry. “Even so, O Lord!” he cried; “rend Thou his kingdom from him.” (A.D. 628.)

§ 5

But before we go on to tell of the rise of Islam in the world, it will be well to complete our survey of the condition of Asia in the dawn of the seventh century.

**Zoroaster
and Mani.**

And a word or so is due to religious developments in the Persian community during the Sassanid period.

¹ The appearance of this name in our *Outline* produced a violent conflict of opinion between the writer and Sir H. H. Johnston upon the question of spelling. The writer clung for a time to Mohammed, the form adopted in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. “There is no *o* and there is no *e* in the Arab alphabet,” Sir Harry wrote. “The word is *Muhammad*, meaning ‘the praiser,’ from *hamada*, ‘he praised.’ Why should we go on spelling this name wrong because the eighteenth-century writers would not take the trouble to find the right pronunciation?” Moreover, *Mohammed* is only one of a multitude of unrighteous variations, Professor Arnold concurred. So *Muhammad* has it.

From the days of Cyrus onward Zoroastrianism had prevailed over the ancient gods of Nineveh and Babylon. Zoroaster (the Greek spelling of the Iranian, “Zarathustra”), like Buddha, was an Aryan. We know nothing of the age in which he lived; some authorities make him as early as 1,000 B.C., others make him contemporary with Buddha or Confucius; and as little of his place of birth or his exact nationality. His teachings are preserved to us in the Zend Avesta, but here, since they no longer play any great part in the world’s affairs, we cannot deal with them in any detail. The opposition of a good god, Ormuzd, the god of light, truth, frankness, and the sun, and a bad god, Ahriman, god of secrecy, cunning, diplomacy, darkness, and night, formed a very central part of his religion. As we find it in history, it is already surrounded by a ceremonial and sacerdotal system; it has no images, but it has priests, temples, and altars, on which burn a sacred fire and at which sacrificial ceremonies are performed. Among other distinctive features is its prohibition of either the burning or the burial of the dead. The Parsees of India, the last surviving Zoroastrians, still lay their dead out within certain open towers, the Towers of Silence, to which the vultures come.

Under the Sassanid kings from Ardashir onward (227), this religion was the official religion; its head was the second person in the state next to the king, and the king in quite the ancient fashion was supposed to be divine or semi-divine and upon terms of peculiar intimacy with Ormuzd.

But the religious fermentation of the world did not leave the supremacy of Zoroastrianism undisputed in the Persian Empire. Not only was there a great eastward diffusion of Christianity, to which we have already given notice, but new sects arose in Persia, incorporating the novel ideas of the time. One early variant or branch of Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, we have already named.² It had spread into Europe by the first century B.C., after the eastern campaigns of Pompey the Great. It became enormously popular with the soldiers and common people, and, until the time of Constantine the Great, continued to be a serious rival to

² There is a good account of Mithraism in C. Bigg’s *The Church’s Task in the Roman Empire*.—E. B.

Christianity. Indeed, one of his successors, the Emperor Julian (361-363), known in Christian history as "Julian the Apostate," made a belated attempt to substitute it for the accepted faith.¹ Mithras was a god of light, "proceeding" from Ormuzd and miraculously born, in much the same way that the second person in the Christian Trinity proceeds from the first. Of this branch of the Zoroastrian stem we need say no more now. In the third century A.D., however, another religion, Manichæism, arose, which deserves some notice now.

Mani, the founder of Manichæism, was born the son of a good family of Ecbatana, the old Medean capital (A.D. 216). He was educated at Ctesiphon. His father was some sort of religious sectary, and he was brought up in an atmosphere of religious discussion. There came to him that persuasion that he at last had the complete light, which is the moving power of all religious initiators. He was impelled to proclaim his doctrine. In A.D. 242, at the accession of Sapor I, the second Sassanid monarch, he began his teaching.

It is characteristic of the way in which men's minds were moving in those days that his teaching included a sort of theocrasia. He was not, he declared, proclaiming anything new. The great religious founders before him had all been right: Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus Christ—all had been true prophets, but to him it was appointed to clarify and crown their imperfect and confused teaching. This he did in Zoroastrian language. He explains the perplexities and contradictions of life as

¹ Julian was not so much a Mithraist as a syncretist. See Alice Gardner, *Julian the Apostate*.—E. B.

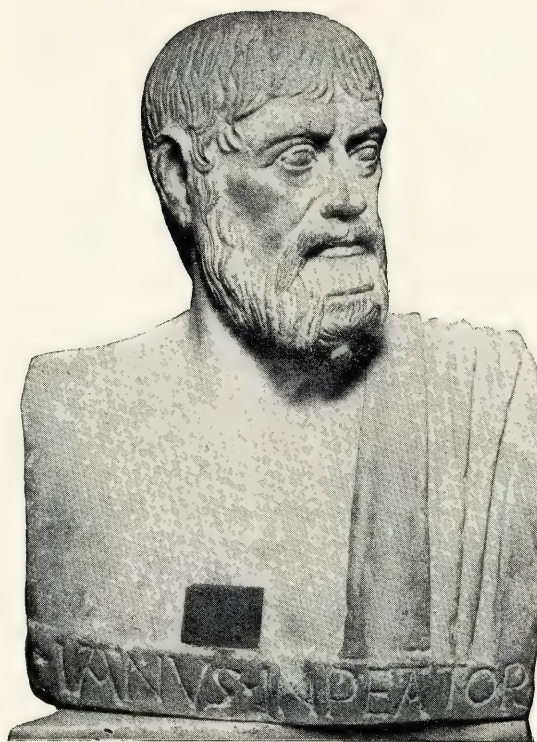


Photo: Anderson.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

a conflict of light and darkness, Ormuzd was God and Ahriman Satan. But how man was created, how he fell from light into darkness, how he is being disentangled and redeemed from the darkness, and of the part played by Jesus in this strange mixture of religions we cannot explain here even if we would. Our interest with the system here is historical and not theological.

But of the utmost historical interest is the fact that Mani not only went about Iran preaching these new and to him these finally satisfying ideas of his, but into Tur-

kestan, into India, and over the passes into China. This freedom of travel is to be noted. It is interesting also because it brings before us the fact that Turkestan was no longer a country of dangerous nomads, but a country in which cities were flourishing and men had the education and leisure for theological argument. The ideas of Mani spread eastward and westward with great rapidity, and they were a most fruitful rootstock of heresies throughout the entire Christian world for nearly a thousand years.

Somewhen about A.D. 270 Mani came back to Ctesiphon and made many converts. This brought him into conflict with the official religion and the priesthood. In 277 the reigning monarch had him crucified and his body, for some unknown reason, flayed, and there began a fierce persecution of his adherents. Nevertheless, Manichæism held its own in Persia with Nestorian Christianity and orthodox Zoroastrianism (Mazdaism) for some centuries.

§ 6

It becomes fairly evident that in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. not merely Persia, but

the regions that are now Turkestan and

Afghanistan were Hunnish Peoples in Central Asia far more and India.

advanced in civilization than were the French and English of that time. The obscurity of the history of these regions has been lifted in the last two decades chiefly through the energy and ability of German explorers, and a very considerable literature written in languages of the Turkish group has been discovered. These extant manuscripts date from the seventh century onward. The alphabet is an adaptation of the Syrian, introduced by Manichæan missionaries, and many of the MSS. discovered—parchments have been found in windows in the place of glass—are as beautifully written as any Benedictine production. Mixed up with a very



Photo: Major W. J. P. Rodd.
ARCH OF CTESIPHON. EXTERIOR VIEW, SHOWING
METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OF OUTER ARCHES.

extensive Manichæan literature are translations of the Christian scriptures and Buddhist writings. Much of this early Turkish material still awaits examination.

Everything points to the conclusion that those centuries which were centuries of disaster and retrogression in Europe were comparatively an age of progress in Middle Asia eastward into China.

A steady westward drift to the north of the Caspian of Hunnish peoples, who were now called Tartars and Turks, was still going on in the sixth century, but it must be thought of as an overflow rather than as a migration of whole peoples. The world from the Danube to the Chinese frontiers was still largely a nomadic world, with towns and cities growing up upon the chief trade routes. There is very little for



Photo: A. B. W. Holland.

THE ARCH OF CTESIPHON, NEAR BAGDAD.

us to tell of the constant clash of the Turkish peoples of Western Turkestan with the Persians to the south of them, the age-long bickering of Turanian and Iranian. We hear nothing of any great northward marches of the Persians, but there were great and memorable raids to the south both by the Turanians to the east and the Alans to the west of the Caspian before the big series of movements of the third and fourth century westward that carried the Alans and Huns into the heart of Europe. There was

India in the footsteps of their kinsmen about the year 470, about a quarter of a century after the death of Attila. They did not migrate into India; they went to and fro, looting in India and returning with their loot to their own country, just as later the Huns established themselves in the great plain of the Danube and raided all Europe.

The history of India during these seven centuries we are now reviewing is punctuated by these two invasions of the Yue-Chi, the Indo-



Photo: Major W. J. P. Rodd.

REMAINS OF AN OLD ZOROASTRIAN TEMPLE AT KANGAVAH, PERSIA.

a nomadic drift to the east of Persia and southward through Afghanistan towards India, as well as this drift to the north-west. These streams of nomads flowed by Persia on either side. We have already mentioned the Yue-Chi (chap. xxix., § 4), who finally descended into India as the Indo-Scythians in the second century. A backward, still nomadic section of these Yue-chi remained in Central Asia, and became numerous upon the steppes of Turkestan, as the Ephthalites or White Huns. After being a nuisance and a danger to the Persians for three centuries, they finally began raiding into

Scythians who, as we have said, wiped out the last traces of Hellenic rule, and the Ephthalites. Before the former of these, the Indo-Scythians, a wave of uprooted populations, the Sakas, had been pushed; so that altogether India experienced three waves of barbaric invasion, about A.D. 100, about A.D. 120, and about A.D. 470. But only the second of these invasions was a permanent conquest and settlement. The Indo-Scythians made their headquarters on the North-west Frontier and set up a dynasty, the Kushan dynasty, who ruled most of North India as far east as Benares.

The chief among these Kushan monarchs was Kanishka (date unknown), who added to North India Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan. Like Asoka, he was a great and vigorous promoter of Buddhism, and these conquests, this great empire of the North-west Frontier, must have brought India into close and frequent relations with China and Tibet.

We will not trouble to record here the divisions and coalescences of power in India, nor the dynasties that followed the Kushans, because these things signify very little to us from our present point of view. Sometimes all India was a patchwork quilt of states; sometimes such empires as that of the Guptas prevailed over great areas. These things made little difference in the ideas, the religion, and the ordinary way of life of the Indian peoples. Brahminism held its own against Buddhism, and the two religions prospered side by side. The mass of the population was living then very much as it lives to-day; dressing, cultivating, and building its houses in much the same fashion.

The irruption of the Ephthalites is memorable not so much because of its permanent effects as because of the atrocities perpetrated by the invaders. These Ephthalites



Reproduced by permission from the Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1911-1912.

REMAINS OF A STATUE OF KANISHKA FOUND IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES. HIS TYPICAL TARTAR QUILTED BOOTS ARE TO BE NOTED.

very closely resembled the Huns of Attila in their barbarism; they merely raided, they produced no such dynasty as the Kushan monarchy; and their chiefs retained their headquarters in Western Turkestan. Mihragula, their most capable leader, has been called the Attila of India. One of his favourite amusements, we are told, was the expensive one of rolling elephants down precipitous places in order to watch their sufferings. His abominations roused his Indian tributary princes to revolt, and he was overthrown (528). But the final ending of the Ephthalite raids into India was effected not by Indians, but by the destruction of their central establishment on the Oxus (565) by the growing power of the Turks, working in

alliance with the Persians. After this break-up, the Ephthalites dissolved very rapidly and completely into the surrounding populations, much as the European Huns did after the death of Attila a hundred years earlier. Nomads without central grazing lands must dis-

perse; there is nothing else for it. Some of the chief Rajput clans of to-day in Rajputana in North India are descended, it is said, from these White Huns.¹



J.F.H.

An Ephthalite Coin....

¹ The Ephthalites on the Oxus produced a coinage in silver and copper

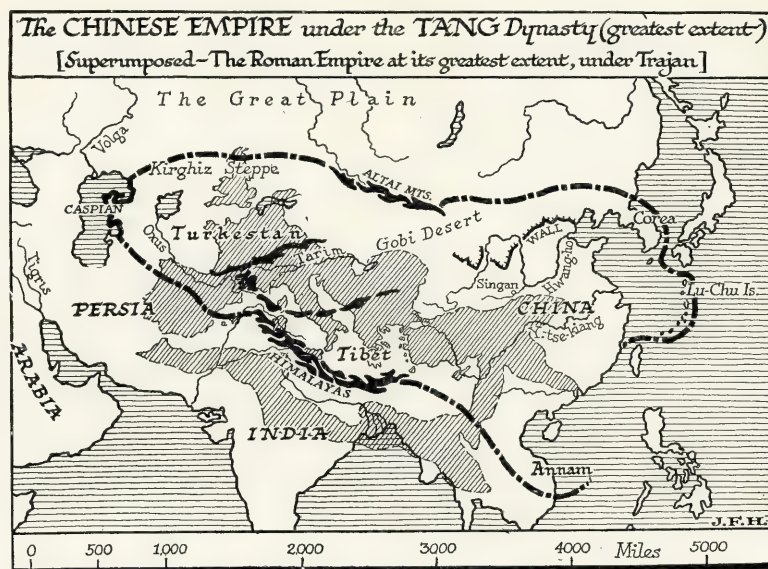
§ 7

During these seven centuries which saw the beginning and the end of the emperors in Rome, and the complete breakdown and recasting of the social, economic, political, and religious life of Europe, the history of China is one of comparative social stability. While the Western world, after its first disastrous attempts to bring in autocracy as a corrective to plutocracy, was beginning again amidst the debris of its social order, China was continuing steadfastly upon the conservative lines that Confucius had emphasized. She had set-backs, pestilences, invasions, great civil wars, and commotions, but the seventh century saw the vast dominions that had been nominally unified by Shi Hwang Ti nine hundred years before, populous, prosperous, and consolidated, the same faiths and the same institutions wearing well and serving an increasing multitude of mankind. From its early beginnings in Kan-su from which it had spread down the Hwang-ho valley and invaded that of the Yang-tse-kiang, the Chinese civilization had now spread over an area much greater than all Europe or than the empire of Trajan at its utmost extent. And its unity was far more real than any unity the Roman Empire could boast; it had a common culture, a common script, common religions, a common body of ideas.

As the compiler of this history sits among consisting of three denominations: heavy silver, light silver, and copper. Thirteen specimens are known to survive, the light silver denomination being represented by two specimens in the British Museum and one at Petrograd, until I was fortunate enough to add two to their number by a *trouvaille* in Oxford Street.—P. G.

Our illustration shows one of these two coins. It may have been struck in India in some state under Ephthalite dominion. Its interest for us lies in the figure it gives of a Hun horseman. He seems to wear a feather head-dress, reminding one of a Red Indian or a Moscow hotel porter, and his leg gear suggests an American cow-boy. Note his great quiver of arrows.—H. G. W.

his books, he searches for some striking social novelty to set against the universal change of ideas, habits, customs, that was going on in the west. Prominent among his notes is the word "tea." China began to drink tea in the sixth century A.D. Chinese poets were writing delightful poems about the effects of the first cup and the second cup and the third cup, and so on. The importance of that fact measures the contrast of east and west. While the west was reconstructing fundamentally, the east was elaborating. Already before the Christian Era, China was producing beautiful



paintings. In the second, third, and fourth centuries some of the most lovely landscapes were painted that have ever been done by mankind. There was also a great production of beautiful vases and carvings. Everywhere fine buildings and decoration increased. Printing from wood blocks began about the same time as tea-drinking. The seventh century also saw a great outbreak of poetry.

These things suggest a world of peaceful progress. But in certain matters China was intensely conservative. Throughout this period she was making no changes in her elaborate, beautiful, but tedious, clumsy, and inflexible script.¹ All the world to the west of her was

¹ The printed characters have remained unchanged, but a cursive script was developing and has developed for ordinary writing and correspondence.—L. Y. C.



ARRIVAL OF A CHIEF AT THE GATE OF A TOWN.
Stone relief, Han dynasty (first century A.D.), British Museum

getting on with developments of the swift and simple invention, the Mediterranean alphabet ; all the alphabets of India and Central Asia are derived from that ; but China remained content with a method of writing that takes long years to learn, and so is inaccessible to the vast majority of her people. And, what may or may not have been one of the clues to her stability, she was developing no general coinage. The cash and credit system of the Western world, at once efficient and dangerous, had not strained her economic life. Not that the monetary idea was unknown. For small transactions the various provinces were using perforated zinc and brass "cash," but for larger there was nothing but stamped ingots of silver. This great empire was still carrying on most of its business on a basis of barter like that which prevailed in Babylon in the days of the Aramean merchants. And so it con-

tinued to do to the dawn of the twentieth century.

We have seen how in the Roman republic economic and social order was destroyed by the too great fluidity of property that money brought about. Money became abstract, and lost touch with the real values it was supposed to represent. Individuals and communities got preposterously into debt, and the world was saddled by a class of rich men who were creditors, men who did not handle and administer any real wealth, but who had the power to call up money. No development of "finance" occurred to the same extent in China. Wealth in China remained real and visible. And China had no need for any Licinian law, nor for a Tiberius Gracchus. The idea of property in China did not extend far beyond tangible things. There was no slavery. The occupier and user of the land was in most



THE LADY FONG (FIRST CENTURY B.C.) THROWING HERSELF BEFORE AN ESCAPED BEAR TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE EMPEROR.

Scene from the scroll painting by Ku K'ai-chih (fourth century A.D.) in the British Museum.

instances practically the owner of it, subject to a land tax. There was a certain amount of small scale landlordism, but no great estates. Landless men worked for wages paid mostly in kind—as they were in ancient Babylon.

The government that spent the land tax of this great industrious community, whose chief ideals were politeness and the correct observance of precedent, was of far less importance to its internal life than to the peoples upon its borders. We have already noted the long rule of the Han dynasty. A division of the empire followed, and a phase known as the "Three Kingdom Period." The fourth century saw a dynasty of more or less civilized Huns established as rulers in the province of Shen-si. This Hunnish kingdom included not merely the north of China, but great areas of Siberia; its dynasty absorbed the Chinese civilization, and its influence carried Chinese trade and knowledge to the Arctic circle. These Huns melted at last into the general population. There were two centuries more of political confusion, but by no means devastating political confusion; which ended in a sort of unification under the Suy dynasty in 590. Under a Suy monarch the Lu-chu isles were annexed to China, and there was a phase of great literary activity. The number of volumes at this time in the imperial library was increased, we are told, to 54,000. The dawn of the seventh century saw the beginning of the great Tang dynasty, which was to endure for three centuries. With the accession (627) of the second emperor of this dynasty, Tai-tsung, we may conclude this chapter of Chinese history.

The dominions of this emperor Tai-tsung extended southward into Annam and westward to the Caspian sea. His southern frontier in that direction marched with that of Persia.

His northern ran along the Altai from the Kirghis steppe, north of the desert of Gobi. But it did not include Corea, which was conquered and made tributary by his son. This Tang dynasty civilized and incorporated into the Chinese race the whole of the southward population, and just as the Chinese of the north call themselves the "men of Han," so the Chinese of the south call themselves the "men of Tang." The law was codified, the literary examination system was revised, and a complete and accurate edition of all the Chinese classics was produced. To the court of Tai-tsung came an embassy from Byzantium, and, what is more

significant, from Persia came a company of Nestorian missionaries (631). These latter Tai-tsung received with great respect; he heard them state the chief articles of their creed, and ordered the Christian scriptures to be translated into Chinese for his further examination. In 638 he announced that he found the new religion entirely satisfactory, and that it might be preached within the empire. He also allowed the building of a church and the



CHRIST WITH NESTORIAN PRIESTS.

From a painting by a Chinese artist of the seventh century (Tang dynasty). From *Chinese Pictorial Art*, by Prof. H. A. Giles.

foundation of a monastery.

A still more remarkable embassy also came to the court of Tai-tsung in the year 628, three years earlier than the Nestorians. This was a party of Arabs, who came by sea to Canton in a trading vessel from Yanbu, the port of Medina in Arabia. (Incidentally it is interesting to know that there were such vessels engaged in an east and west trade at this time.) These Arabs had been sent by that Muhammad we have already mentioned, who styled himself "The Prophet of God," and the message they brought to Tai-tsung was probably identical with the summons which was sent in the same year to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius and to Kavadh in Ctesiphon. But the

Chinese monarch neither neglected the message as Heraclius did, nor insulted the envoys after the fashion of the parricide Kavadh. He received them well, expressed great interest in their theological views, and assisted them, it is said, to build a mosque for the Arab traders in Canton—a mosque which survives to this day. It is one of the oldest mosques in the world.

§ 8

The urbanity, the culture, and the power of China at the dawn of the seventh century A.D.

Intellectual Fetters of China. are in so vivid a contrast with the decay, disorder, and divisions of the Western world, as at once to

raise some of the most interesting questions in the history of civilization. Why did not China keep this great lead? Why does she not to this day dominate the world culturally and politically?

For a long time she certainly did keep ahead. It is only a thousand years later in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the discovery of America, the spread of printed books and education in the west, and the dawn of modern scientific discovery, that we can say with confidence that the Western world began to pull ahead of China. Under the Tang rule, and then again under the Sung dynasty (960-1279), and again during the period of the Mings (1358-1644), China presented a spectacle of prosperity, happiness, culture, and artistic and intellectual activity far in front of any contemporary state. And seeing that she achieved so much, why did she not achieve more? Chinese shipping was upon the seas, and there was a considerable overseas trade during that time; China knew very early of the mariner's compass. Why did the Chinese never discover America or Australia? There was much isolated observation, ingenuity, and invention. The Chinese knew of gunpowder in the sixth century,¹ they used coal and gas heating centuries before these things were used in Europe; their bridge-building, their hydraulic engineering was admirable; the knowledge of materials shown in their enamel and lacquer ware is very great. Why did they never organize the system of record and co-operation in inquiry that has given the world modern science. And why, in spite of their general training in

good manners and self-restraint, did intellectual education never soak down into the general mass of the population? Why are the masses of China to-day, and why have they always been, in spite of an exceptionally high level of natural intelligence, illiterate?

It is customary to meet such questions with rather platitudinous answers. We are told that the Chinaman is the most conservative of human beings, that, in contrast with the European races, his mind is twisted round towards the past, that he is the willing slave of etiquette and precedent to a degree inconceivable to Western minds. He is represented as having a mentality so distinct that one might almost expect to find a difference in brain structure to explain it. The appeals of Confucius to the wisdom of the ancients are always quoted to clinch this suggestion.

If, however, we examine this generalization more closely, it dissolves into thin air. The superior intellectual initiative, the liberal enterprise, the experimental disposition that is supposed to characterize the Western mind, is manifest in the history of that mind only during certain phases and under exceptional circumstances. For the rest, the Western world displays itself as traditional and conservative as China. And, on the other hand, the Chinese mind has, under conditions of stimulus, shown itself quite as inventive and versatile as the European, and the very kindred Japanese mind even more so. For, take the case of the Greeks, the whole swing of their mental vigour falls into the period between the sixth century B.C. and the decay of the Alexandrian Museum under the later Ptolemies in the second century B.C. There were Greeks before that time and Greeks since, but a history of a thousand years of the Byzantine Empire showed the Hellenic world at least as intellectually stagnant as China. Then we have already drawn attention to the comparative sterility of the Italian mind during the Roman period and its abundant fertility since the Renaissance of learning. The English mind again had a phase of brightness in the seventh and eighth centuries, and it did not shine again until the fifteenth. Again the mind of the Arabs, as we shall presently tell, blazed out like a star for half a dozen generations after the appearance of Islam, having never achieved

¹ Helmolt.

anything of importance before or since. On the other hand, there was always a great deal of scattered inventiveness in China, and the progress of Chinese art witnesses to new movements and vigorous innovations. We exaggerate the reverence of the Chinese for their fathers; parricide was a far commoner crime among the Chinese emperors than it was even among the rulers of Persia. Moreover, there have been several liberalizing movements in China, several recorded struggles against the "ancient ways."

It has already been suggested that phases of real intellectual progress in any community seem to be connected with the existence of a detached class of men, sufficiently free not to be obliged to toil or worry exhaustively about mundane needs, and not rich and powerful enough to be tempted into extravagances of lust, display, or cruelty. They must have a sense of security, but not a conceit of superiority. This class, we have further insinuated, must be able to talk freely and communicate easily. It must not be watched for heresy or persecuted for any ideas it may express. Such a happy state of affairs certainly prevailed in Greece during its best days. A class of intelligent, free gentlefolk is indeed evident in history whenever there is a record of bold philosophy or effective scientific advances.

In the days of Tang and Sung and Ming there must have been an abundance of pleasantly circumstanced people in China of just the class that supplied most of the young men of the Academy at Athens, or the bright intelligences of Renaissance Italy, or the members of the London Royal Society, that mother society of modern science; and yet China did not produce in these periods of opportunity any such large beginnings of recorded and analysed fact.

If we reject the idea that there is some profound racial difference between China and the West which makes the Chinese by nature conservative and the West by nature progressive, then we are forced to look for the operating cause of this difference in progressiveness in some other direction. Many people are disposed to find that operating cause which has, in spite of her original advantages, retarded China so greatly during the last four or five centuries, in the imprisonment of the Chinese mind in a

script and in an idiom of thought so elaborate and so difficult that the mental energy of the country has been largely consumed in acquiring it. This view deserves examination.

We have already given an account in chap. xviii. of the peculiarities of Chinese writing and of the Chinese language. The Japanese writing is derived from the Chinese, and consists of a more rapidly written system of forms. A



MODEL OF A CHINESE HOUSE, PLACED ON TWO BRICKS.

From a tomb, Han dynasty (first and second centuries A.D.), British Museum.

great number of these forms are ideograms taken over from the Chinese and used exactly as the Chinese ideograms are used, but also a number of signs are used to express syllables; there is a Japanese syllabary after the fashion of the Sumerian syllabary we have described in chap. xviii. The Japanese writing remains a clumsy system, as clumsy as cuneiform, though not so clumsy as Chinese; and there has been a movement in Japan to adopt a Western alphabet. Korea long ago went a step farther and developed a true alphabet from the same Chinese origins. With these exceptions all the great writing

systems now in use in the world are based on the Mediterranean alphabets, and are beyond comparison more easily learnt and mastered than the Chinese. This means that while other peoples learn merely a comparatively simple and straightforward method of setting down the language with which they are familiar, the Chinaman has to master a great multitude of complex word signs and word groups. He must not simply learn the signs, but the established grouping of those signs to represent various meanings. He must familiarize himself, therefore, with a number of exemplary classical works. Consequently in China, while you will find great numbers of people who know the significance of certain frequent and familiar characters, you discover only a few whose knowledge is sufficiently extensive to grasp the meaning of a newspaper paragraph, and still fewer who can read any subtlety of intention or fine shades of meaning. In a lesser degree this is true also of Japan. No doubt European readers, especially of such word-rich languages as English or Russian, vary greatly among themselves in regard to the extent of books they can understand and how far they understand them; their power varies according to their vocabularies; but the corresponding levels of understanding among the Chinese represent a far greater expenditure of time and labour upon their attainment. A mandarin's education in China is practically learning to read. A man who can read and write well in China is a specialist, and we are told of the Emperor Tai-Tsung of the Tang dynasty as one of his glories that "he himself knew how to write."

And it may be that the consequent preoccupation of the educated class during its most susceptible years upon the Chinese classics gave them a bias in favour of this traditional learning upon which they had spent so much time and energy. Few men who have toiled to build up any system of knowledge in their minds will willingly scrap it in favour of something strange and new; this disposition is as characteristic of the West as of the East; it is shown as markedly by the scholars of the British and American universities as by any Chinese mandarins, and the British at the present time, in spite of the great and manifest advantages in popular education and national propaganda

the change would give them, refuse to make any move from their present barbaric orthography towards a phonetic alphabet and spelling. The peculiarities of the Chinese script, and the educational system arising out of that script, must have acted age after age as an invincible filter that favoured the plastic and scholarly mind as against the restive and originating type, and kept the latter out of positions of influence and authority. There is much that is plausible in this explanation.

There have been several attempts to simplify the Chinese writing and to adopt an alphabetical system. In the early days of Buddhism in China, when there was a considerable amount of translation from Sanscrit, Indian influences came near to achieving this end; two Chinese alphabets were indeed invented, and each had some little use. But what hindered the general adoption of these, and what stands in the way of any phonetic system of Chinese writing to-day, is this, that while the literary script and phraseology is the same from one end of China to the other, the spoken language of the common people, both in pronunciation and in its familiar idioms, varies so widely that men from one province may be incomprehensible to men from another. There is, however, a "standard Chinese," a rather bookish spoken idiom, which is generally understood by educated people; and it is upon the possibility of applying an alphabetical system of writing to this standard Chinese that the hopes of modern educational reformers in China are based at the present time. For fresh attempts are now being made to release the Chinese mind from this ancient entanglement.

The very success and early prosperity and general contentment of China in the past must have worked to justify in that land all the natural self-complacency and conservatism of mankind. No animal will change when its conditions are "good enough" for present survival, and in this matter man is still an animal. Until the nineteenth century, for more than two thousand years, there was really nothing in the history of China that could cause any serious doubts in the mind of a Chinaman of the general superiority of his own civilization to that of the rest of the world, and there was no reason apparent therefore for

any alteration. China produced a profusion of beautiful art, some delightful poetry, astonishing cookery, and thousands of millions of glowingly pleasant lives generation after generation. Her ships followed her marvellous inland waterways, and put to sea but rarely, and then only to India or Borneo as their utmost adventure. (Until the sixteenth century we must remember European seamen never sailed out into the Atlantic Ocean. The Norse discovery of America, the Phœnician circumnavigation of Africa, were exceptional feats.) And these things were attained without any such general boredom, servitude, indignity, and misery as underlay the rule of the rich in the Roman Empire. There was much poverty, much discontent, but it was not massed poverty, it was not a necessary popular discontent. For a thousand years the

Chinese system, though it creaked and swayed at times, seemed proof against decay. Dynastic changes there were, rebellions, phases of disorder, famines, pestilences; two great invasions that set foreign dynasties upon the throne of the Son of Heaven, but no such shock as to revolutionize the order of the daily round. The emperors and dynasties might come and go; the mandarins, the examinations, the classics, and the traditions and habitual life remained. China's civilization had already reached its fullest development in the seventh century A.D., and though it continued to spread slowly and steadily into Annam, into Cambodia, into Siam, into Tibet, into Nepal, Korea, Mongolia, and Manchuria, there is henceforth little more than such geographical progress to record of it in this history for a thousand years.¹

¹ The reason for the stationariness of China goes, we think, deeper than a script. China has formed a social-economic system which (1) cannot be transplanted, and (2) cannot be changed without tremendous effort. She lives by agriculture—rice-growing. (There is some tea among the foot hills, but it has to grow *with* rice to support the population.) Towns exist—on the edge of the rice-fields, for their needs. The town is dependent on the country, not as elsewhere, country on town. There are small properties; all the hands are wanted, and can be absorbed, in old ancestral agricultural jobs. A state of small peasants, tilling, tilling, tilling, has no source of initiative towards change. If coal is to be mined in the future, and China industrialized, then a society that has not fundamentally changed for thousands of years may be changed. China is like an Egypt or Sumeria, so big that the nomads—those terrible agents of change—beat on its mass in vain. What the nomads have not done, modern industrialism may do.—J. L. M. and E. B.

L. C. B. disagrees with these two historians in his analysis of the Chinese problem. He writes as follows:

"In order to answer the question—why China achieved so much under the T'ang, Sung, and Ming dynasties, and thereafter failed to achieve more, it is necessary to consider what were the principal factors of culture and progress under these dynasties, and how they came to be extinguished.

"From the earliest times there have always been two widely differing types of Chinese mind—the Northern or Confucian, and the Southern or Taoist. As Mr. Okakura has pointed out, the Yangtse-Kiang and the Hoang-Ho rivers are respectively, from the point of view of thought and culture, the Mediterranean and the Baltic of China. Taoism was the idealism of the south, Confucianism the practice of the north. Both stood for adjustment; but the adjustment of Confucius was the adjustment of the individual in his social and ceremonial relations to others, while that of

Lao-tse was the adjustment of the individual soul in its relation to the Infinite. The history of China is bound up with the struggle of those two forces, culminating in the practically complete defeat of Taoism after centuries of ebb and flow. Chu Hsi, A.D. 1130–1200, was the later St. Paul of modern Confucianism. During the T'ang, Sung, and Ming dynasties China was temporarily united, and free play was allowed to the thought of both schools. Each played its part and each reacted upon the other, to the great benefit of the Empire. Yet both systems carried within them the seeds of decay. Taoism, divorced from the affairs of everyday life and the education of the people, lost itself in art, literature, and mythology. Confucianism added layer after layer of hard shell about the inert organism of social life. The end was finally reached in 1421 under the Mings with the transference of the capital from Nanking to Peking, and the dominance of the Confucian party who had brought it about. Only in the later Ming period does the great solitary figure of Wang Yang Ming arise. His central doctrine that thought and learning are of small value unless translated into action had little immediate effect in China, but it fell upon Japanese soil, quickened the drooping Samurai spirit, and reached maturity with the Russo-Japanese war and the advance of modern Japan.

"The imprisonment of the Chinese mind in the ancient script is merely one aspect of Confucianism in its bondage to the past. The statement of J. L. M. and E. B. that China is a nation of peasants is incomprehensible to me. There has always been a great urban industrialism and a great commerce. 'The Chinese,' as Dyer Ball says, 'are pre-eminently a trading race. . . . Nor has the trade of China been simply a modern affair. From remote antiquity the Chinese have been true to their commercial instincts, and have not only been the civilizers of Eastern Asia, supplying them with their letters and literature' [and artistic products], 'but they have also provided for their more

§ 9¹

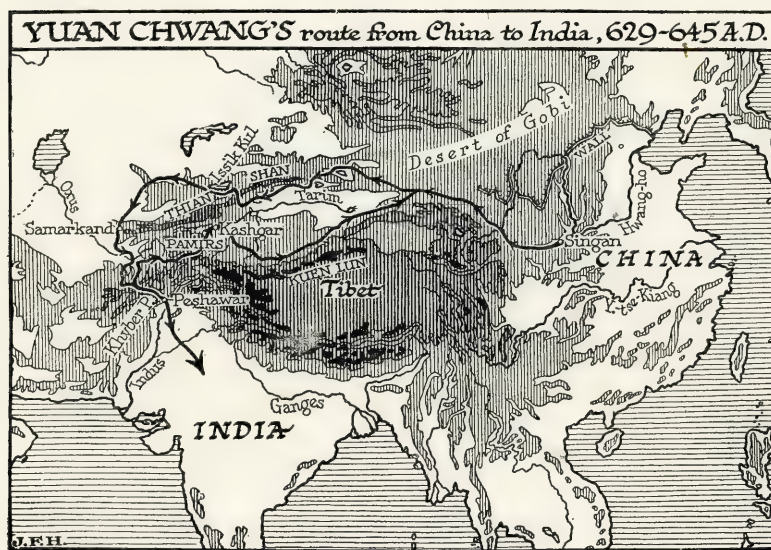
In the year 629, the year after the arrival of Muhammad's envoys at Canton and thirty odd years after the landing of Pope Gregory's missionaries in England, a certain learned and devout Buddhist named Yuan Chwang started out from Singan, Tai-Tsung's capital, upon a great journey to India. He was away sixteen years, he returned in 645, and he wrote an account of his travels which is treasured as a Chinese classic. One or two points about his experi-

nevertheless, he gives us a series of illuminating flashes upon China, Central Asia, and India in the period now under consideration.

His journey was an enormous one. He went and came back by way of the Pamirs. He went by the northern route, crossing the desert of Gobi, passing along the southern slopes of the Thian Shan, skirting the great deep blue lake of Issik Kul, and so to Tashkend and Samarkand, and then more or less in the footsteps of Alexander the Great southward to the Khyber Pass and Peshawur. He returned by the southern

route, crossing the Pamirs from Afghanistan to Kashgar, and so along the line of retreat the Yue Chi had followed in the reverse direction seven centuries before, and by Yarkand, along the slopes of the Kuen Lun to rejoin his former route near the desert end of the Great Wall. Each route involved some hard mountaineering. His journeyings in India are untraceable; he was there fourteen years, and he went all over the peninsula from Nepal to Ceylon.

At that time there was an



ences are to be noted here because they contribute to our general review of the state of the world in the seventh century A.D.

Yuan Chwang was as eager for marvels and as credulous as Herodotus, and without the latter writer's fine sense of history; he could never pass a monument or ruin without learning some fabulous story about it; Chinese ideas of the dignity of literature perhaps prevented him from telling us much detail of how he travelled, who were his attendants, how he was lodged, or what he ate and how he paid his expenses—details precious to the historian;

material wants, and received in exchange the commodities which they required from the neighbouring nations.' Trade with India was developed to a great extent in the ninth century A.D."

This interesting question is also discussed very ably and interestingly in Hubbard's *The Fate of Empires*.

¹ See Watters' *Travels of Yuan Chwang* and Beal's *Life of Hiuen Tsiang* (= Yuan Chwang).

imperial edict forbidding foreign travel, so that Yuan Chwang started from Singan like an escaping criminal. There was a pursuit to prevent him carrying out his project. How he bought a lean red-coloured horse that knew the desert paths from a strange greybeard, how he dodged a frontier guard-house with the help of a "foreign person" who made him a bridge of brushwood lower down the river, how he crossed the desert guided by the bones of men and cattle, how he saw a mirage, and how twice he narrowly escaped being shot by arrows when he was getting water near the watch-towers on the desert track, the reader will find in the *Life*. He lost his way in the desert of Gobi, and for four nights and five days he had no water; when he was in the mountains among the glaciers, twelve of his party were frozen to death. All this is in the *Life*; he tells little of it in his own account of his travels.

He shows us the Turks, this new development of the Hun tradition, in possession not only of what is now Turkestan, but all along the northern route. He mentions many cities and considerable cultivation. He is entertained by various rulers, allies of or more or less nominally tributaries to China, and among others by the Khan of the Turks, a magnificent person in green satin, with his long hair tied with silk.

"The gold embroidery of this grand tent shone with a dazzling splendour; the ministers of the presence in attendance sat on mats in long rows on either side all dressed in magnificent brocade robes, while the rest of the retinue on duty stood behind. You saw that although it was a case of a frontier ruler, yet there was an air of distinction and elegance. The Khan came out from his tent about thirty paces to meet Yuan-chwang, who after a courteous greeting entered the tent. . . . After a short interval envoys from China and Kao-chang were admitted and presented their despatches and credentials, which the Khan perused. He was much elated, and caused the envoys to be seated; then he ordered wine and music for himself and them and grape-syrup for the pilgrim. Hereupon all pledged each other, and the filling and draining of the winecups made a din and bustle, while the mingled music of various instruments rose loud: although the airs were the popular strains of foreigners, yet they pleased the senses and exhilarated the mental faculties. After a little, piles of roasted beef and mutton were served for the others, and lawful food, such as cakes, milk, candy, honey, and grapes, for the pilgrim. After the entertainment, grape-syrup was again served, and the Khan invited Yuan Chwang to improve the occasion, whereupon the pilgrim expounded the doctrines of the 'ten virtues,' compassion for animal life, and the paramitas and emancipation. The Khan, raising his hands, bowed and gladly believed and accepted the teaching."

Yuan Chwang's account of Samarkand¹ is of a large and prosperous city, "a great commercial entrepôt, the country about it very fertile, abounding in trees and flowers and yielding many fine horses. Its inhabitants were skilful craftsmen, smart and energetic."

¹ There is some little doubt about this identification. See Watters.

At that time we must remember there was hardly such a thing as a town in Anglo-Saxon England.

As his narrative approached his experiences in India, however, the pious and learned pilgrim in Yuan Chwang got the better of the traveller, and the book becomes congested with monstrous stories of incredible miracles.² Nevertheless, we get an impression of houses, clothing, and the like, closely resembling those of the India of to-day. Then as now the kaleidoscopic variety of an Indian crowd contrasted with the blue uniformity of the multitude in China. In the time of Buddha it is doubtful if there were reading and writing in India; now reading and writing were quite common accomplishments. Yuan Chwang gives an interesting account of a great Buddhist university at Nalanda, where ruins have quite recently been discovered and excavated. Nalanda and Taxilla seem to have been considerable educational centres as early as the opening of the schools of Athens. The caste system Yung Chwang found fully established in spite of Buddha, and the Brahmins were now altogether in the ascendant. He names the four main castes we have mentioned in chap. xx., § 4 (Q.v.), but his account of their functions is rather different. The Sudras, he says, were the tillers of the soil. Indian writers say that their function was to wait upon the three "twice born" castes above them.

But, as we have already intimated, Yuan Chwang's account of Indian realities is swamped by his accumulation of legends and pious inventions. For these he had come, and in these he rejoiced. The rest, as we shall see, was a task that had been set him. The faith of Buddha which in the days of Asoka, and even so late as Kaniska, was still pure enough to be a noble inspiration, we now discover absolutely lost in a wilderness of preposterous rubbish, a philosophy of endless Buddhas, tales of manifestations and marvels like a Christmas pantomime, immaculate conceptions by six-tusked elephants, charitable princes giving themselves up to be eaten by starving tigresses, temples built over a sacred nail-paring and the like. We cannot give such stories here; if the reader likes that sort of thing, he must go to the publications of the Royal Asiatic Society or the India

² The *British Encyclopædia* article (Hsuan Tsang) is full and good on his Indian travels.

Society, where he will find a delirium of such imaginations. And in competition with this Buddhism, intellectually undermined as it now was and smothered in gilded decoration, Brahminism was everywhere gaining ground again, as Yung Chwang notes with regret.

Side by side with these evidences of a vast intellectual decay in India we may note the repeated appearance in Yuan Chwang's narrative of ruined and deserted cities. Much of the country was still suffering from the ravages of the Ephthalites and the consequent disorders. Again and again we find such passages as this: "he went north-east through a great forest, the road being a narrow, dangerous path, with wild buffalo and wild elephants, and robbers and hunters always in wait to kill travellers, and emerging from the forest he reached the country of Kou-shih-na-ka-lo (Kúsinagara). The city walls were in ruins, and the towns and villages were deserted. The brick foundations of the "old city" (that is, the city which had been the capital) were above ten *li* in circuit; there were very few inhabitants, the interior of the city being a wild waste." This ruin was, however, by no means universal; there is at least as much mention of crowded cities and villages and busy cultivations.

The *Life* tells of many hardships upon the return journey: he fell among robbers; the great elephant that was carrying the bulk of his possessions was drowned; he had much difficulty in getting fresh transport. Here we cannot deal with these adventures.

The return of Yuan Chwang to Singan, the Chinese capital, was, we gather, a triumph. Advance couriers must have told of his coming. There was a public holiday; the streets were decorated by gay banners and made glad with music. He was escorted into the city with great pomp and ceremony. Twenty horses were needed to carry the spoils of his travels; he had brought with him hundreds of Buddhist books written in Sanskrit, and made of trimmed leaves of palm and birch bark strung together in layers; he had many images great and small of Buddha, in gold, silver, crystal, and sandalwood; he had holy pictures, and no less than one hundred and fifty well authenticated true relics of Buddha. Yuan Chwang was presented to the emperor, who treated him as a personal

friend, took him into the palace, and questioned him day by day about the wonders of these strange lands in which he had stayed so long. But while the emperor asked about India, the pilgrim was disposed only to talk about Buddhism.

Buddhist writers thought very highly of Tai-Tsung because of his reception of Yung Chwang (645). But so did the Moslem historians because of that mosque at Canton, and so did the Christian writers because of the Nestorian envoys (631).

The subsequent history of Yuan Chwang contains two incidents that throw light upon the mental workings of this great monarch, Tai Tsung, who was probably quite as much a Moslem as he was a Christian or a Buddhist. The trouble about all religious specialists is that they know too much about their own religion and how it differs from others; the advantage, or disadvantage, of such creative statesmen as Tai Tsung and Constantine the Great is that they know comparatively little of such matters. Evidently the fundamental good of all these religions seemed to Tai Tsung to be much the same fundamental good. So it was natural to him to propose that Yung Chwang should now give up the religious life and come into his foreign office, a proposal that Yung Chwang would not entertain for a moment. The emperor then insisted at least upon a written account of the travels, and so got this classic we treasure. And finally Tai Tsung proposed to this highly saturated Buddhist that he should now use his knowledge of Sanscrit in translating the works of the great Chinese teacher Lao-tse, so as to make them available for Indian readers. It seemed, no doubt, to the emperor a fair return and a useful service to the fundamental good that lies beneath all religions. On the whole, he thought Lao-tse might very well rank with or even a little above Buddha, and therefore that if his work was put before the Brahmins, they would receive it gladly. In much the same spirit Constantine the Great had done his utmost to make Arius and Athanasius settle down amicably together. But naturally enough this suggestion was repulsed by Yuan Chwang. He retired to a monastery and spent the rest of his years translating as much as he could of

the Buddhist literature he had brought with him into elegant Chinese writing.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Since the last three chapters have been parallel chapters covering the same period, it will perhaps help the reader to keep his idea of the order of events clear and assist him in his grasp upon this period, if we give here a chronological table of the chief events between 50 B.C. and the year A.D. 650, and also a diagram of what we may call the chief time masses of that period.

B.C.

- 50. Rome recovering from Carrhæ (53). Parthians in Persia.
- China and much of Central Asia under the Han dynasty.
- Huns drifting westward.
- 48. Cæsar defeats Pompey at Pharsalus.
- 44. Cæsar assassinated.
- 31. Battle of Actium.
- 27. Augustus Cæsar Princeps.

- 4. True date of birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

A.D. Christian Era begins.

- 6. Province of Mœsia established.
- 9. Province of Pannonia established. Imperial boundary carried to the Danube.
- 14. Augustus dies. Tiberius emperor.
- 30. Jesus of Nazareth crucified.
- 37. Caligula succeeds Tiberius.
- 41. Claudius (the first emperor of the legions) made emperor by pretorian guard after murder of Caligula.
- 54. Nero succeeds Claudius.
- 61. Boadicea massacres Roman garrison in Britain.
- 68. Suicide of Nero. Galba. Otho. Vitellius.
- 69. Vespasian begins the so-called Flavian dynasty.
- 79. Titus succeeds Vespasian.
- 81. Domitian.
- 84. North Britain annexed.

A.D.

- 96. Nerva begins the so-called dynasty of the Antonines.
- 98. Trajan succeeds Nerva.
- 102. Pan Chau on the Caspian Sea. (Indo-Scythians invading North India.)
- 117. Hadrian succeeds Trajan. Roman Empire at its greatest extent.
- 138. Antoninus Pius succeeds Hadrian. (The Indo-Scythians at this time are destroying the last traces of Hellenic rule in India.)
- 150. [About this time Kanishka reigned in India, Kashgar, Yarkand, and Kotan.]
- 161. Marcus Aurelius succeeds Antoninus Pius.
- 164. Great plague begins, and lasts to the death of M. Aurelius (180). This also devastated all Asia.
- 180. Death of Marcus Aurelius. (Nearly a century of war and disorder begins in the Roman Empire.)
- 220. End of the Han dynasty. Beginning of four hundred years of division in China.
- 227. Ardashir I (first Sassanid shah) puts an end to Arsacid line in Persia.
- 242. Mani begins his teaching.
- 247. Goths cross Danube in a great raid.
- 251. Great victory of Goths. Emperor Decius killed.
- 260. Sapor I, the second Sassanid shah, takes Antioch, captures the Emperor Valerian, and is cut up on his return from Asia Minor by Odenathus of Palmyra.
- 269. The Emperor Claudius defeats the Goths at Nish.
- 270. Aurelian becomes emperor.
- 272. Zenobia carried captive to Rome: End of the brief glories of Palmyra.
- 275. Probus succeeds Aurelian.
- 276. Goths in Pontus. The Emperor Probus forces back Franks and Alemanni.

A.D.		A.D.	
277.	Mani is crucified in Persia.	455.	Vandals sack Rome.
284.	Diocletian becomes emperor.		
303.	Diocletian persecutes the Christians.	470.	Ephthalites' raid into India.
311.	Galerius abandons the persecution of the Christians.	476.	Odoacer, king of a medley of Teutonic tribes, informs Constantinople that there is no emperor in the West. End of the Western Empire.
312.	Constantine the Great becomes emperor.	480.	St. Benedict born.
313.	Constantine presides over a Christian Council at Arles.	481.	Clovis in France.
321.	Fresh Gothic raids driven back.	483.	Nestorian church breaks away from the Orthodox Christian church.
323.	Constantine presides over the Council of Nicæa. The Nicene Creed.	493.	Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, conquers Italy and becomes King of Italy, but is nominally subject to Constantinople.
337.	Vandals driven by Goths obtain leave to settle in Pannonia. Constantine is baptized on his death-bed.		(Gothic kings in Italy. Goths settle on special confiscated lands as a garrison.)
354.	St. Augustine born.	527.	Justinian emperor.
361-3.	Julian the Apostate attempts to substitute Mithraism for Christianity.	528.	Mihiragula, the (Ephthalite) Attila of India, overthrown.
379.	Theodosius the Great (a Spaniard) emperor.	529.	Justinian closes the schools at Athens, which had flourished nearly a thousand years. Belisarius (Justinian's general) takes Naples.
390.	The statue of Serapis at Alexandria broken up.	531.	Chosroes I begins to reign.
392.	Theodosius the Great is emperor of east and west.	543.	Great plague in Constantinople.
395.	Theodosius the Great dies. Honorius and Arcadius re-divide the empire with Stilicho and Alaric as their masters and protectors.	544.	St. Benedict dies.
410.	The Visigoths under Alaric capture Rome.	553.	Goths expelled from Italy by Justinian. Cassiodorus founds a monastery.
425.	Vandals settling in south of Spain. Huns in Pannonia, Goths in Dalmatia. Visigoths and Suevi in Portugal and North Spain. English invading Britain.	565.	Justinian dies. The Lombards conquer most of North Italy (leaving Ravenna and Rome Byzantine). The Turks break up the Ephthalites in Western Turkestan.
429.	Vandals under Genseric invade Africa.	570.	Muhammad born.
439.	Vandals take Carthage.	579.	Chosroes I dies. (The Lombards prevail in Italy.)
448.	Priscus visits Attila.	590.	Plague raging in Rome. (Gregory the Great—Gregory I—and the vision of St. Angelo.) Chosroes II begins to reign.
451.	Attila raids Gaul and is defeated by Franks, Alemanni, and Romans at Troyes.	610.	Heraclius begins to reign.
453.	Death of Attila.	619.	Chosroes II holds Egypt, Jerusalem, Damascus, and has armies on Hellespont. Tang dynasty begins in China.

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| <p>A.D.
 622. The Hegira.
 623. Battle of Badr.
 627. Great Persian defeat at Nineveh by Heraclius. The Meccan Allies besiege Medina. Tai Tsung becomes Emperor of China.
 628. Kavadh II murders and succeeds his father, Chosroes II.
 Muhammad writes letters to all the rulers of the earth.
 629. Yuan Chwang starts for India. Muhammad enters Mecca.
 631. Tai Tsung receives Nestorian missionaries.</p> | <p>A.D.
 632. Muhammad dies. Abu Bekr Caliph.
 634. Battle of the Yarmuk. Moslems take Syria. Omar second Caliph.
 637. Battle of Kadessia.
 638. Jerusalem surrenders to Omar.
 642. Heraclius dies.
 643. Othman third Caliph.
 645. Yuan Chwang returns to Singan.

 655. Defeat of the Byzantine fleet by the Moslems.
 656. Othman is murdered at Medina.</p> |
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XXXII

MUHAMMAD AND ISLAM¹

§ I

WE have already described how in A.D. 628 the courts of Heraclius, of Kavadh, and of Tai Tsung were visited by Arab envoys sent from a certain Muhammad, "The Prophet of God," at the small trading town of Medina in Arabia before Muhammad. We must tell now who this prophet was who had arisen among the nomads and traders of the Arabian desert.

From time immemorial Arabia, except for the fertile strip of the Yemen to the south, had been a land of nomads, the headquarters and land of origin of the Semitic peoples. From Arabia at various times waves of these nomads had drifted north, east, and west into the early civilizations of Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, and Mesopotamia. We have noted in this history how the Sumerians were swamped and overcome by such Semitic waves, how the Semitic Phœnicians and Canaanites established themselves along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, how the Babylonians and Assyrians were settled Semitic peoples, how the Hyksos conquered Egypt, how the Arameans established themselves in Syria with Damascus as their capital, and how the Hebrews partially conquered their "Promised

Land." At some unknown date the Chaldeans drifted in from Eastern Arabia and settled in the old southern Sumerian lands. With each invasion first this and then that section of the Semitic peoples comes into history. But each of such swarmings still leaves a tribal nucleus behind to supply fresh invasions in the future.

The history of the more highly organized empires of the horse and iron period, the empires of roads and writing, shows Arabia thrust like a wedge between Egypt, Palestine, and the Euphrates Tigris country, and still a reservoir of nomadic tribes who raid and trade and exact tribute for the immunity and protection of caravans. There are temporary and flimsy subjugations. Egypt, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, Syria, Constantinople, and again Persia claim some unreal suzerainty in turn over Arabia, profess some unsubstantial protection. Under Trajan there was a Roman province of "Arabia," which included the then fertile region of the Hauran and extended as far as Petra. Now and then some Arab chief and his trading city rises to temporary splendour. Such was that Odenathus of Palmyra, whose brief career we have noted in chap. xxxi, § 2, and another such transitory desert city whose ruins still astonish the traveller was Baalbek.

After the destruction of Palmyra, the desert Arabs began to be spoken of in the Roman and Persian records as Saracens.

¹ See Margoliouth's *Mahommedanism and his Life of Mahomet*.—E. B.

In the time of Chosroes II, Persia claimed a certain ascendancy over Arabia, and maintained officials and tax collectors in the Yemen. Before that time the Yemen had been under the rule of the Abyssinian Christians for some years, and before that for seven centuries it had had native princes professing, be it noted, the Jewish faith.

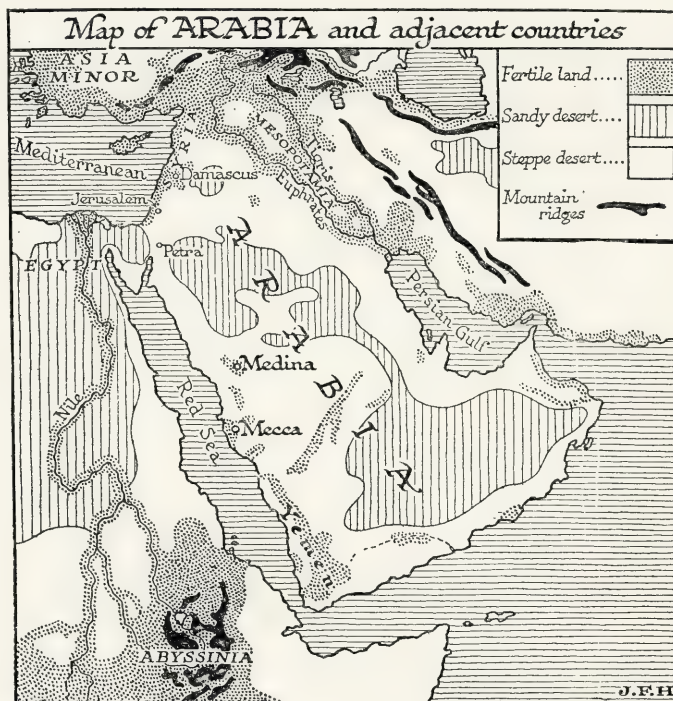
Until the opening of the seventh century A.D. there were no signs of any unwonted or dangerous energy in the Arabian deserts. The life of the country was going on as it had gone on for long generations. Wherever there were fertile patches, wherever, that is, there was a spring or a well, a scanty agricultural population subsisted, living in walled towns because of the Bedouin who wandered with their sheep, cattle, and horses over the desert. Upon the main caravan routes the chief towns rose to a certain second-rate prosperity, and chief among them were Medina and Mecca.¹ In the beginning of the seventh century Medina was a town of about 15,000 inhabitants all told; Mecca may have had twenty or twenty-five thousand. Medina was a comparatively well-watered town, and possessed abundant date groves; its inhabitants were Yemenites, from the fertile land to the south. Mecca was a town of a different character, built about a spring of water with a bitter taste, and inhabited by recently settled Bedouin.

Mecca was not merely nor primarily a trading centre; it was a place of pilgrimage. Among the Arab tribes there had long existed a sort of Amphictyony (see chap. xxii., § 1) centering upon Mecca and certain other sanctuaries; there were months of truce to war and blood feuds, and customs of protection and hospitality for the pilgrim. In addition there had grown up an Olympic element in these gatherings; the Arabs were discovering possibilities of beauty in their language, and there were recitations of war poetry and love songs. The sheiks of the tribes, under a "king of the Poets,"

¹ Should be spelt Mādina and Mākka.—H. H. J.

sat in judgment, and awarded prizes; the prize songs were sung through all Arabia.

The Kaaba, the sanctuary at Mecca, was of very ancient date. It was a small square temple of black stones, which had for its cornerstone a meteorite. This meteorite was regarded as a god, and all the little tribal gods of Arabia were under his protection. The permanent inhabitants of Mecca were a tribe of Bedouin who had seized this temple and constituted



themselves its guardians. To them there came in the months of truce a great incourse of people, who marched about the Kaaba ceremonially, bowed themselves, and kissed the stone, and also engaged in trade and poetical recitations. The Meccans profited much from these visitors.

All of this is very reminiscent of the religious and political state of affairs in Greece fourteen centuries earlier. But the paganism of these more primitive Arabs was already being assailed from several directions. There had been a great proselyting of Arabs during the period of the Maccabees and Herods in Judea; and, as we have already noted, the Yemen had been in succession under the rule of Jews (Arab proselytes to Judaism, *i.e.*), Christians, and Zoroastrians. It is evident that there must



Photo : E. N. A.

MEDINA : A PANORAMA OF THE CITY.

have been plenty of religious discussion during the pilgrimage fairs at Mecca and the like centres. Naturally enough Mecca was a stronghold of the old pagan cult which gave it its importance and prosperity ; Medina, on the other hand, had Jewish proclivities, and there were Jewish settlements near by. It was inevitable that Mecca and Medina should be in a state of rivalry and bickering feud.

§ 2

It was in Mecca about the year A.D. 570 that Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born.

Life of Muhammad to the Hegira. He was born in considerable poverty, and even by the standards of the desert he was uneducated ; it is doubtful if he ever learnt to write.

He was for some years a shepherd's boy ; then he became the servant of a certain Kadija, the widow of a rich merchant. Probably he had to look after her camels or help in her trading operations ; and he is said to have travelled with caravans to the Yemen and to Syria. He does not seem to have been a very useful trader, but he had the good fortune to find favour in the lady's eyes, and she married him, to the

great annoyance of her family. He was then only twenty-five years old. It is uncertain if his wife was much older, though tradition declares she was forty. After the marriage he probably made no more long journeys. There were several children, one of whom was named Abd Manif—that is to say, the servant of the Meccan god Manif, which demonstrates that at that time Muhammad had made no religious discoveries.

Until he was forty he did indeed live a particularly undistinguished life in Mecca, as the husband of a prosperous wife. There may be some ground for the supposition that he became partner in a business in agricultural produce. To anyone visiting Mecca about A.D. 600 he would probably have seemed something of a loafer, a rather shy, good-looking individual, sitting about and listening to talk, a poor poet, and an altogether second-rate man.

About his internal life we can only speculate. Imaginative writers have supposed that he had great spiritual struggles, that he went out into the desert in agonies of doubt and divine desire. " In the silence of the desert night, in the bright heat of noontide desert day, he, as do all men,

had known and felt himself alone yet not in solitude, for the desert is of God, and in the desert no man may deny Him." ¹ Maybe that was so, but there is no evidence of any such desert trips. Yet he was certainly thinking deeply of the things about him. Possibly he had seen Christian churches in Syria; almost certainly he knew much of the Jews and their religion, and he heard their scorn for this black stone of the Kaaba that ruled over the three hundred odd tribal gods of Arabia. He saw the pilgrimage crowds, and noted the threads of insincerity and superstition in the paganism of the town. It oppressed his mind. The Jews had perhaps converted him to a belief in the One True God, without his knowing what had happened to him.

At last he could keep these feelings to himself no longer. When he was forty he began to talk about the reality of God, at first apparently only to his wife and a few intimates. He produced certain verses, which he declared had been revealed to him by an angel. They involved an assertion of the unity of God and some acceptable generalizations about righteousness. He also insisted upon a future life, the fear of hell for the negligent and evil, and the reservation of paradise for the believer in the One God.

Except for his claim to be a new prophet, there does not seem to have been anything very new about these doctrines at the time, but this was seditious teaching for Mecca, which partly subsisted upon its polytheistic cult, and which was therefore holding on to idols when all the rest of the world was giving them up. Like Mani, Muhammad claimed that the prophets before him, and especially Jesus and Abraham, had been divine teachers, but that he crowned and completed their teaching. Buddhism, however, he did not name, probably because he had never heard of Buddha. Desert Arabia was in a theological backwater.

For some years the new religion was the secret of a small group of simple people, Kadija, the prophet's wife, Ali, an adopted son, Zeid, a slave, and Abu Bekr,² a friend and admirer. For some years it was an obscure sect in a few households of Mecca, a mere scowl and muttering at idolatry, so obscure and unimportant that the leading men of the town did not trouble about it in the least. Then it gathered strength. Muhammad began to preach more openly, to teach the doctrine of a future life, and to

¹ Mark Sykes.

² Should be Abu Bakr (= Father of Blessedness).—H. H. J.

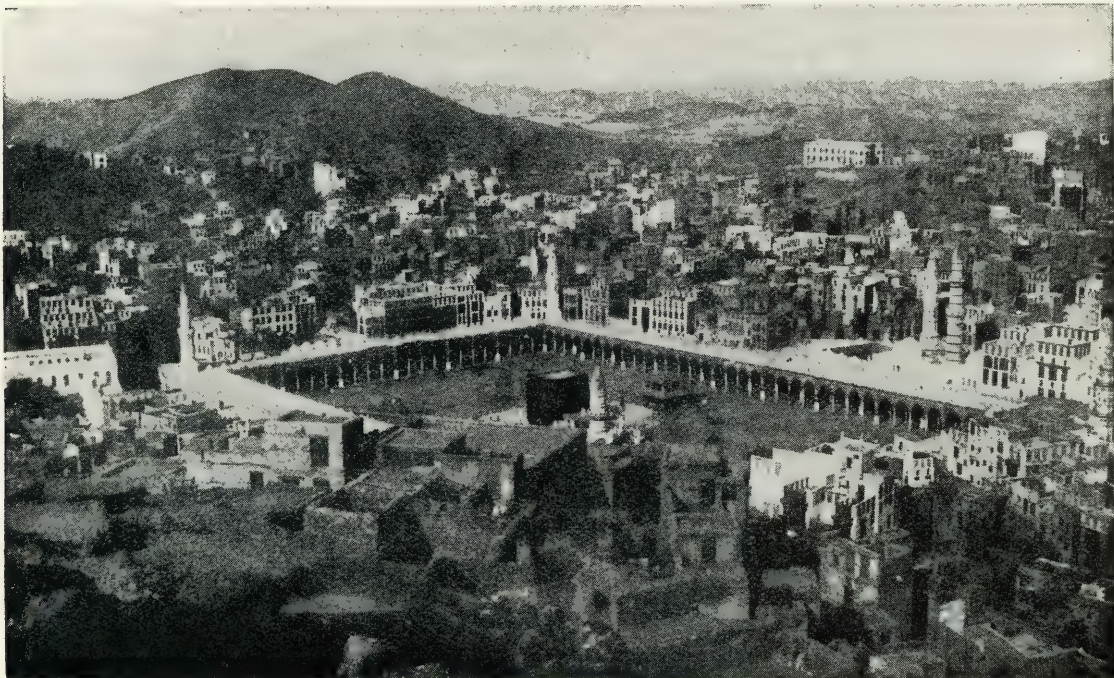


Photo: H. J. Shepstone.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MECCA, THE RELIGIOUS CAPITAL OF ISLAM.

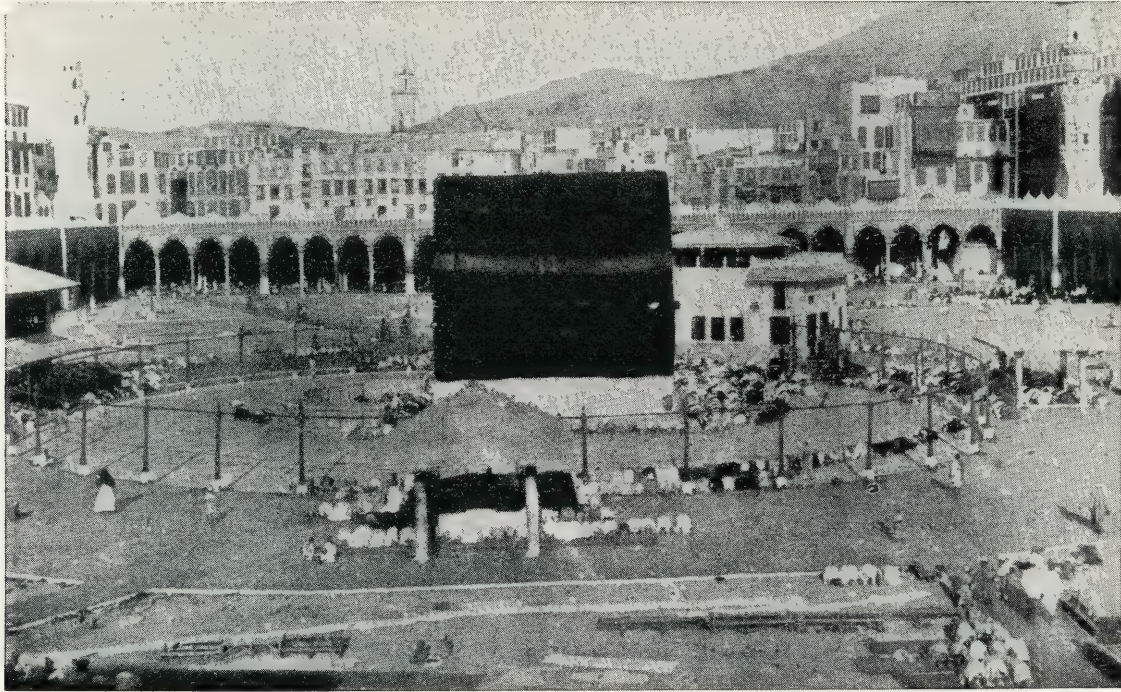


Photo : H. J. Shepsstone.

PILGRIMS FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH PROSTRATING THEMSELVES BEFORE THE KAABA, THE MOSLEM HOLY OF HOLIES AT MECCA.

threaten idolaters and unbelievers with hell fire. He seems to have preached with considerable effect. It appeared to many that he was aiming at a sort of dictatorship in Mecca, and drawing many susceptible and discontented people to his side; and an attempt was made to discourage and suppress the new movement.

Mecca was a place of pilgrimage and a sanctuary; no blood could be shed within its walls; nevertheless, things were made extremely disagreeable for the followers of the new teacher. Boycott and confiscation were used against them. Some were driven to take refuge in Christian Abyssinia. But the Prophet himself went unscathed because he was well connected, and his opponents did not want to begin a blood feud. We cannot follow the fluctuations of the struggle here, but it is necessary to note one perplexing incident in the new prophet's career, which, says Sir Mark Sykes, "proves him to have been an Arab of the Arabs." After all his insistence upon the oneness of God, he wavered. He came into the courtyard of the Kaaba, and declared that the gods and goddesses of Mecca might, after all, be real, might be a species of saints with a power of intercession.

His recantation was received with enthusiasm, but he had no sooner made it than he repented, and his repentance shows that he had indeed the fear of God in him. His lapse from honesty proves him honest. He did all he could to repair the evil he had done. He said that the devil had possessed his tongue, and denounced idolatry again with renewed vigour. The struggle against the antiquated deities, after a brief interval of peace, was renewed again more grimly, and with no further hope of conciliation.

For a time the old interests had the upper hand. At the end of ten years of prophesying, Muhammad found himself a man of fifty, and altogether unsuccessful in Mecca. Kadija, his first wife, was dead, and several of his chief supporters had also recently died. He sought a refuge at the neighbouring town of Tayf, but Tayf drove him out with stones and abuse. Then, when the world looked darkest to him, opportunity opened before him. He found he had been weighed and approved in an unexpected quarter. The city of Medina was much torn by internal dissension, and many of its people, during the time of pilgrimage

to Mecca, had been attracted by Muhammad's teaching. Probably the numerous Jews in Medina had shaken the ancient idolatry of the people. An invitation was sent to him to come and rule in the name of his God in Medina.

He did not go at once. He parleyed for two years, sending a disciple to preach in Medina and destroy the idols there. Then he began sending such followers as he had in Mecca to Medina to await his coming there; he did not want to trust himself to unknown adherents in a strange city. This exodus of the faithful continued, until at last only he and Abu Bekr remained.

In spite of the character of Mecca as a sanctuary, he was very nearly murdered there. The elders of the town evidently knew of what was going on in Medina, and they realized the danger to them if this seditious prophet presently found himself master of a town on their main caravan route to Syria. Custom must bow to imperative necessity, they thought; and they decided that, blood feud or no blood feud, Muhammad must die. They arranged that he should be murdered in his bed; and in order to share the guilt of this breach of sanctuary, they appointed a committee to do this, representing every family in the city except Muhammad's own. But Muhammad had already prepared his flight; and when in the night they rushed into his room, they found Ali, his adopted son, sleeping or feigning sleep on his bed.

The flight (the Hegira¹) was an adventurous one, the pursuit was pressed hard. Expert desert trackers sought for the spoor to the north of the town, but Muhammad and Abu Bekr had gone south to certain caves where camels and provisions were hidden, and thence he made a great detour to Medina. There he and his faithful companion arrived, and were received with great enthusiasm on September 20, 622. It was the end of his probation and the beginning of his power.²

¹ Should be spelt and pronounced Hijra.—H. H. J.

² From the year of this flight (= Hegira) from Mecca through the desert to Medina, the Moslem world dates its era. By adding 622 if a date is between September and the New Year, or 623 if it is between the New Year and September, A.H. can be converted, therefore, into A.D.

§ 3

Until the Hegira, until he was fifty-one, the character of the founder of Islam is a matter of speculation and dispute. Thereafter he is in the light. We discover a man of great imaginative power but tortuous in the Arab fashion, and with most of the virtues and defects of the Bedouin.

The opening of his reign was "very Bedouin." The rule of the One God of all the earth, as it was interpreted by Muhammad, began with a series of raids—which for more than a year were invariably unsuccessful—upon the caravans of Mecca. Then came a grave scandal, the breaking of the ancient customary truce of the Arab Amphictyony in the sacred month of Rahab. A party of Moslems, in this season of profound peace, treacherously attacked a small caravan and killed a man. It was their only success, and they did it by the order of the Prophet.

Presently came a battle. A force of seven hundred men had come out from Mecca to convoy home another caravan, and they encountered a large raiding party of three hundred. There was a fight, the battle of Badr, and the Meccans got the worst of it. They lost about fifty or sixty killed and as many wounded. Muhammad returned in triumph to Medina, and was inspired by Allah and this success to order the assassination of a number of his opponents among the Jews in the town who had treated his prophetic claims with a disagreeable levity.

But Mecca resolved to avenge Badr, and at the battle of Uhud, near Medina, inflicted an indecisive defeat upon the Prophet's followers. Muhammad was knocked down and nearly killed, and there was much running away among his followers. The Meccans, however, did not push their advantage and enter Medina.

For some time all the energies of the Prophet were concentrated upon rallying his followers, who were evidently much dispirited. The Koran records the chastened feelings of those days. "The *suras* of the Koran," says Sir Mark Sykes, "which are attributed to this period, excel nearly all the others in their majesty and sublime confidence." Here, for the judgment of the reader, is an example of these

majestic utterances, from the recent orthodox translation by the Maulvi Muhammad Ali.¹

"Oh, you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will turn back losers.

"Nay! Allah is your Patron, and He is the best of the helpers.

"We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the unjust.

"And certainly Allah made good to you his promise, when you slew them by His permission, until when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved; of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the hereafter; then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers.

"When you ran off precipitately, and did not wait for anyone, and the Apostle was calling you from your rear, so He gave you another sorrow instead of your sorrow, so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor at what befell you; and Allah is aware of what you do.

"Then after sorrow he sent down security upon you, a calm coming upon a party of you, and there was another party whom their own souls had rendered anxious; they entertained about Allah thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly, saying: We have no hand in this affair. Say, surely the affair is wholly in the hands of Allah. They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you. They say: Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here. Say: had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they would be slain, and that Allah might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allah knows what is in the breasts.

"As for those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the devil sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

Inconclusive hostilities continued for some years, and at last Mecca made a crowning effort to stamp out for good and all the growing power of Medina. A mixed force of no less than 10,000

men was scraped together, an enormous force for the time and country. It was, of course, an entirely undisciplined force of footmen, horsemen, and camel riders, and it was prepared for nothing but the usual desert scrimmage. Bows, spears, and swords were its only weapons. When at last it arrived amid a vast cloud of dust, in sight of the hovels and houses of Medina, instead of a smaller force of the same kind drawn up for battle, as it had expected, it found a new and entirely disconcerting phenomenon, a trench and a wall. Assisted by a Persian convert, Muhammad had entrenched himself in Medina!

This trench struck the Bedouin miscellany as one of the most unsportsmanlike things that had ever been known in the history of the world. They rode about the place. They shouted their opinion of the whole business to the besieged. They discharged a few arrows, and at last encamped to argue about this amazing outrage. They could arrive at no decision. Muhammad would not come out; the rains began to fall, the tents of the allies got wet and the cooking difficult, views became divergent and tempers gave way, and at last this great host dwindled again into its constituent parts without ever having given battle (627). The bands dispersed north, east, and south, became clouds of dust, and ceased to matter. Near Medina was a castle of Jews, against whom Muhammad was already incensed because of their disrespect for his theology. They had shown a disposition to side with the probable victor in this last struggle, and Muhammad now fell upon them, slew all the men, nine hundred of them, and enslaved the women and children. Possibly many of their late allies were among the bidders for these slaves. Never again after this quaint failure did Mecca make an effective rally against Muhammad, and one by one its leading men came over to his side.

We need not follow the windings of the truce and the treaty that finally extended the rule of the Prophet to Mecca. The gist of the agreement was that the faithful should turn towards Mecca when they prayed instead of turning towards Jerusalem as they had hitherto done, and that Mecca should be the pilgrimage centre of the new faith. So long as the pil-

¹ Published by the *Islamic Review*.

A CENTURY OF HISTORY

THE STORY OF A GREAT DISCOVERY

VIII

IT was the year 1777 when William Murdoch, following, in the satiric words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees—the high road to England," left his father's home at Bello Mill for Birmingham. The chief attraction presented to the raw youth by that well-known Midland town was the fact that his famous fellow-countryman, James Watt, the inventor of the steam-engine, had recently set up as partner with Matthew Boulton as an engineer and surveyor. It was not the first joint undertaking of the kind into which Watt had entered. Before his venture at Birmingham his partner for the steam-engine patent was Dr. Roebuck, of Borrowstones, the founder of the Carron Ironworks, and it is important to know that at Carron was built the bevelled mill-gearing invented by John Murdoch, the father of the inventor of gas. As showing also the close association of the Murdoch fortunes with those of Watt, it may be mentioned that the latter erected his first engine at Kinneil. Roebuck's dwelling-place near Linlithgow. It was therefore to be expected that the young Murdoch should seek out Watt, having heard so much of his achievements during his youth.

Murdoch's first visit to the Soho works was marked by an incident which probably assisted him greatly in the judgment of Boulton, the only partner who was present on the occasion. William was nervous on interviewing so great a man, and happened to drop his hat. That specimen of head-gear was not made of ordinary felt: on falling it made too much noise to be mistaken for such material. In reply to Boulton's inquiry, the young man confessed it was made of "timber," and had been turned to the required shape "in a bit laithy" of his own contriving. Here was a *rara avis*, a youth who not only thought for himself, but carried his ideas into practice. The result of this fortunate accident was that Murdoch was taken on as an assistant. His wage would make the modern worker turn up his nose in scorn, for it was no more than 15/- per week, that sum to be increased to 17/- per week when he was employed in the country, and to 18/- per week when he was in London. But, small as the wage seems to us now, it was perfectly satisfactory to Murdoch, who settled down to a career in association with the firm that was only brought to an end by his death sixty-two years afterwards.

The operations of Messrs. Boulton and Watt embraced general engineering and surveying, but their real work was destined to be bound up with the development of the steam-engine. The affairs of Watt's original partner, Dr. Roebuck, had become involved shortly before Murdoch's first visit to Soho, and Boulton took over his share of Watt's patents, which amounted to two-thirds of the profits. At the same time an extension of the patent was secured, the Act of Parliament being passed for this purpose in 1775. The engine was removed from Kinneil to Birmingham, and, when it had been put in order, the firm announced their readiness to

supply similar appliances for use to industrial undertakings generally.

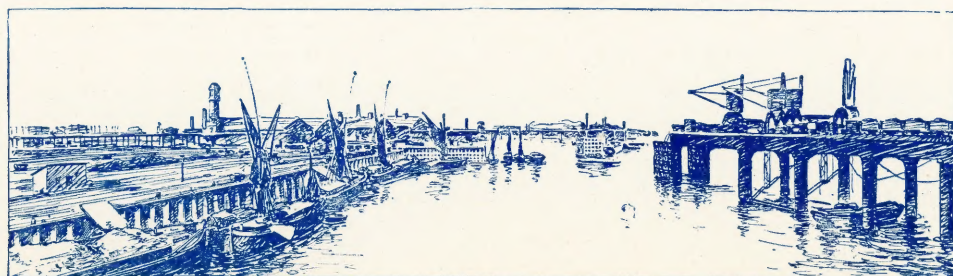
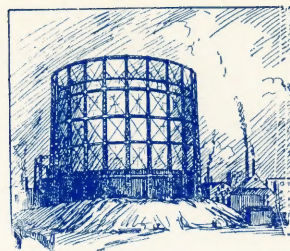
Among the earliest purposes to which they were put was that of pumping the Cornish tin-mines in 1778, and young Murdoch, who had in that short time achieved a position of considerable trust, was sent to act in charge of this machinery.

But it was no easy task that faced the young inventor. For one thing, the men under him were inclined to mutiny against his authority. In illustration of the kind of thing Murdoch had to put up with in those early days, Watt himself used to tell the following piquant story. One day, we read in J. P. Muirhead's book, "The Origin and Progress of the Mechanical Inventions of James Watt," when some of the mining captains attempted to bully him, "he quietly locked the door of the room in which they were assembled, stripped, and, making a dexterous use of those arms with which nature had supplied him, administered to more than one of their number a lesson of persuasive efficacy such as they would never forget, and such as he was never called upon to repeat. He was, in truth, of Herculean proportions, and in muscular power nearly unrivalled."

His power as a leader of men thus demonstrated, Murdoch settled down to steady unremitting work in the interests of his firm. But, at the same time, he found opportunity for exercising his powers of invention. One of his most notable contrivances was a working model of a carriage to be propelled along the road by steam power. This was the first locomotive ever in operation in the Kingdom, and was made by Murdoch's own unaided labour. The model was shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851, and was in the possession of William Murdoch's family until 1883, when it was acquired from the inventor's great-grandson by Sir Richard and Mr. George Tangye. Those two eminent men presented it to Birmingham University. It is a little odd to find that Murdoch, in his endeavours to experiment with the subject of steam locomotion, met with the most marked discouragement from the inventor of the steam-engine himself. The fact is that Watt had come to the conclusion, after careful thought, that all projects of the kind were impracticable, and, besides, feared that if Murdoch pursued his schemes, the firm would lose his valuable services. In the process of throwing cold water on the steam-locomotive idea, Watt was aided by Matthew Boulton, who, by a mere accident, was the means of preventing Murdoch from going to London to patent the invention.

On this we may quote from Mr. Charles Hunt's "A History of the Introduction of Gas Lighting." "Who can measure," says Mr. Hunt, "the consequences of this chance meeting? But for it steam locomotion might have become an accomplished fact long before the days of George Stephenson; but for it, also, the practical genius of Murdoch might have been lost to gas lighting, which, left to the imagination of Winsor, would probably have been indefinitely postponed."

(To be continued)



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